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THE
REPORT
OF THE
POOR LAW
COMMISSION

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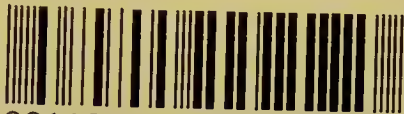
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PREFACE

IT has been thought desirable to reprint in pamphlet form the long and very complete summary, published in "The Times" of February 18th, of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress, and of the almost equally voluminous Report signed by a minority of the members. Undoubtedly these two together form the most important Blue Book of our time. While other Royal Commissions have dealt, perhaps with equal thoroughness, with questions of great moment affecting special interests or special sections of the community, this one deals with questions that concern and affect us all—questions that go deep down to the foundations of modern society; questions which must be solved if British civilisation is to remain worthy of the name, and if the country is to continue prosperous and strong. It is now more than seventy years since the first Reformed Parliament took in hand the old Poor Law and entirely recast it, and since that time a mass of legislation has come into existence bearing upon one or other aspect of the problem, with the result, as these Reports show, that nobody is satisfied. There has been an immense and ever growing expenditure upon workhouses, Poor Law infirmaries, Poor Law schools, and other portions of a vast equipment; some 650 Boards of Guardians have given time and labour to their management, many of them, though unfortunately not all, with admirable disinterestedness; and yet, though the mass of pauperism grows and grows, the name of "the House" is a name of terror to the decent poor, outdoor relief is an apparently insoluble difficulty, and the defects of the local administration have become a by-word.

It was quite time that a serious attempt should be made on the part of the Government to overhaul the whole system and to set a number of fully qualified persons to carry out an exhaustive inquiry. Accordingly, just before Mr. Balfour's Government resigned, a large and in some ways very strong Royal Commission was appointed, with instructions to inquire:—

- (1) Into the working of the laws relating to the relief of poor persons in the United Kingdom;
- (2) Into the various means which have been adopted outside of the Poor Laws for meeting distress arising from want of employment, particularly during periods of severe industrial depression.

Its warrant of appointment is dated December 4th, 1905; and its Report

was issued last week, after three years and two months of hard and assiduous labour.

Usually when a Royal Commission is set to inquire into questions upon which very different opinions are strongly held, whether by experts or by parties, the Government of the day is apt to choose men of wide general experience of affairs, who have not committed themselves to any strong views on either side. The Chairman is a man who has held high office; three or four of the members are or have been conspicuous figures in Parliament; and the rest are either high officials or persons well known in the City or in the business community in other parts of the country. There is much to be said for this kind of Commission, but Mr. Balfour and his Home Secretary, Mr. Akers-Douglas, seem to have thought that the problem of poverty and the Poor Laws, with that terrible question of unemployment that lies so near, were too complicated to be profitably reported upon by a Commission not containing a large expert element. Accordingly, while giving the Chairmanship to an ex-Cabinet Minister, Lord George Hamilton—whose wise and able conduct of the Commission, it may here be said, is praised on all hands—the Government called to his aid not only the heads or high officials of the Local Government Boards for the three kingdoms, but various past or present guardians, three clergymen well known for their work among the poor, a political economist from Glasgow and another from Oxford, and three ladies, each of them in her way a recognised authority on these matters. For the first two years also the Commission had the valuable help of Mr. Charles Booth, in himself a tower of strength for such an investigation; but unfortunately ill-health caused him to resign a year ago. It should also be added that a short time after its accession, the new Government, at the suggestion of its Labour adherents in Parliament, added to the Commission Mr. Francis Chandler, the Secretary to an important Trade Union. With a Commission so constituted fears were expressed that there would be much difficulty in coming to an agreement. The existence of a Minority Report of unprecedented length and of the most complicated kind shows that the agreement has not been complete; but on the other hand, on the essential points, if we consider the instruction given to the Commission it is much more complete than might appear on the surface. On the great question of the new form which the administration of the Poor Law is to take, the differences are not vital; where they are vital is the whole range of cognate questions bearing on the organisation of labour generally, and the means to be taken for the reduction of unemployment. Here both the majority and the minority have gone beyond their brief, and both have made investigations and recommendations that may ultimately prove to be of the greatest possible value. But it must not be forgotten that this was not the object that they were primarily set to consider, nor does their disagreement under this head invalidate their substantial accord upon the primary question, how the administration of the Poor Law is to be improved, and how we are to set about the task of reducing pauperism.

Both sides agree to abolish direct election of the guardians, and with it the guardians themselves ; to abolish the union area and the general workhouse, substituting for the one a much larger area, and for the other a system of classified institutions ; to substitute the softly sounding name of Public Assistance (" L'Assistance Publique ") for the Poor Law ; to make the new area the county or the county borough ; and to make the Council either itself the Authority or directly responsible for appointing the Authority ; and to carry out very thoroughly the definite association of voluntary with " legal " aid. Thus far we have agreement ; and the reasons for the condemnation of the general workhouse and for the enlargement of the areas, given at great length in both reports, are entirely convincing. Nor is anyone likely to disagree with the conclusion that the already established County and County Borough Councils, which have worked so well for nearly twenty years, should, in one form or another, take over the administration of Public Assistance. Here, however, there is a difference of some importance between the majority and the minority. The former think—and most people will agree with them—that these bodies, composed of busy men who give their services, have already more than enough to do, and that to add a vast new department to their work would tend to throw too much of it into the hands of paid officials. So the majority recommends that the new Public Assistance Authority (which is to be helped by local Public Assistance Committees who would investigate the cases on their merits) should be a Statutory Committee to be appointed by the Council ; that of this one-half " may be " members of the Council, and the other half " are to be " outside the Council, " and to consist of persons experienced in the local administration of Public Assistance or other cognate work." This last clause would secure the presence and help of a sufficient number of ex-guardians, Charity Organisation secretaries, and the like. On the other hand, Mrs. Webb's Minority Report wishes to hand over all the work of the existing guardians bodily to the Council, and to " break up the Poor Law " by dividing it among the different existing Committees for Health, Education, Pensions, etc. The difficulty of how to get the work done is apparently to be solved by merely increasing the numbers of the Councils. Undoubtedly this plan has the advantage of making our Local Government a little more symmetrical, but we very much doubt whether it would by any possibility produce, as compared with the scheme of the majority, such efficient work or so much of that local knowledge which is absolutely essential to the right working of Public Assistance. This, however, is a difference which concerns machinery alone ; and, as we have said, it is not vital. It is otherwise when we come to the inquiry and policy of the two sides with regard to the vast question which, as we quite admit, lies at the back of the whole subject—the question of employment and unemployment. Part VI. of the Majority Report covers 140 folio pages, and forms of itself a treatise on the recent history and present position of the labour problem, which ought to be reprinted as a sixpenny pamphlet and to find its way into everybody's hands. Part II. of the Minority Report on " The Destitution of

the Able-Bodied " is still longer, and, it need not be said, its recommendations are infinitely more drastic. Almost incidentally the Report throws out the remark, as though it were indisputable, that the age for old-age pensions should be reduced to 65, if not to 60 ; on which it may be observed that Lord Rothschild's Committee estimated that the cost, taking 65 as the age limit, would be £27,000,000 a year ; and we may assume that if 60 were the limit, that sum would be nearly doubled. Some further and more detailed recommendations are that labour must be not only regularised, but organised ; and " that the duty of so organising the national labour market as to minimise unemployment should be placed upon a Minister responsible to Parliament, who might be designated the Minister for Labour." He is to be the head of a department with six sections and six Assistant-Secretaries ; and the first thing that these gentlemen are to do is to " decasualise casual labour," to " suppress under-employment," and " to take action to ensure the immediate absorption, or else to provide the full and honourable maintenance, at the public expense, of the surplus of labourers." Another essential point in the minority recommendations is that this Ministry is to lay down a " ten years' programme " of work for the unemployed in slack times, such work meaning afforestation, land reclamation, etc. ; and for this the sum of £40,000,000 is to be allocated, or £4,000,000 a year. Even without the reduction of the old-age pension limit which the minority so light-heartedly recommends, we doubt whether their serious proposals would mean an expenditure of less than double the sum at present paid towards the relief of the poor. And even if this colossal sum could by any possibility be raised, there would remain the question whether it is not possible to purchase efficiency too dear ; whether, that is to say, these reforms would not imply not only an enormous outlay in money, but the enfeeblement and deterioration of the national character. In other words, the minority recommendations are the recommendations of State Socialism ; and the State must be sick indeed before it has recourse to such desperate remedies.

POOR LAW COMMISSION.

REPORT.

The report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress has been issued [Cd.4499].

The Commission was appointed in December, 1905, to inquire—(1) Into the working of the laws relating to the relief of poor persons in the United Kingdom; (2) into the various means which have been adopted outside of the Poor Laws for meeting distress arising from want of employment, particularly during periods of severe industrial depression; and to consider and report whether any, and, if so, what modification of the Poor Laws or changes in their administration or fresh legislation for dealing with distress are advisable.

The following is a full list of the Commissioners, three of whom are ladies:

Lord George Hamilton, The O'Connor Don, Sir H. A. Robinson (Vice-President of the Local Government Board for Ireland), Mr. Charles Booth, F.R.S., Sir Samuel Provis (Permanent Secretary to the Local Government Board for England), Mr. Frank Holdsworth Bentham (Chairman of the Bradford Board of Guardians), Dr. Arthur Henry Downes (senior medical inspector for Poor Law purposes to the Local Government Board for England), the Rev. Thory Gage Gardiner, Mr. George Lansbury, Mr. C. S. Loch (secretary to the Charity Organisation Society), Mr. James Patten MacDougall (Vice-President of the Local Government Board for Scotland), Mr. Thomas Hancock Nunn, the Rev. Lancelot Ridley Phelps, the Rev. Henry Russell Wakefield, Mr. William Smart, Mrs. Helen Bosanquet, Mrs. Sidney Webb, and Miss Octavia Hill. Mr. Francis Chandler was subsequently added to the Commission, as was also Dr. Kelly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Ross.

It will be seen that they include an ex-Cabinet Minister, a Roman Catholic Bishop, three clergymen of the Church of England, the permanent heads of the Local Government Boards for England, Scotland, and Ireland, a Poor Law medical inspector, three professors of political economy, several Poor Law guardians or ex-guardians, the Chairman of the Unemployed Body for London, members of distress committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act, a representative of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, the secretary of the London Charity Organisation Society, and various persons engaged in unofficial philanthropic and social work. The Commission may therefore fairly claim to be of a representative character.

The Commission, which has been sitting for a little over three years, has held over 200 meetings, and taken evidence, oral and written, from over 1,300 witnesses ; while the Commissioners have made more than 800 personal visits to unions, meetings of boards of guardians, and institutions in England, Scotland, and Ireland. In addition, a considerable body of evidence has been obtained from abroad, and reports have been obtained from a number of Special Investigators appointed by the Commission to conduct investigations into particular subjects. It is expected that the evidence, including the reports of special investigators, will, when published, occupy more than 40 volumes and 14,000 folio pages.

The volume containing the report extends to some 1,250 folio pages, and contains a majority report of some 640 pages signed by 14 out of 18 Commissioners, some memoranda of reservations on particular points by five Commissioners who have signed the majority report, and a separate minority report of over 500 pages by four Commissioners who have not signed the majority report. The report is, we believe, the largest which has ever been issued at one time by a Royal Commission, and its unwieldy size suggests the desirability of dividing up in future any such lengthy documents into volumes more convenient to handle.

THE MAJORITY REPORT.

The following account deals with the majority report, which has been signed by the Chairman, Lord George Hamilton, the Lord Bishop of Ross. all four officials, and eight other Commissioners, including the bearers of such well-known names as those of Mr. C. S. Loch, Miss Octavia Hill, and Mrs. Bosanquet. Five of the majority make certain reservations. The minority report is signed by the Rev. Prebendary Russell Wakefield, Mr. F. Chandler, Mr. G. Lansbury, and Mrs. Sidney Webb.

The report is divided into nine parts :

Part I. deals with procedure.

Part II. is a statistical survey of the problems and progress of pauperism.

Part III. is an historical sketch of the Poor Laws up to the date of the report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in 1834.

Part IV. gives the historical development of various branches of Poor Law administration from 1834 down to the present day, with the Commissioners' criticisms thereon.

Part V. contains an historical and critical account of the existing system of medical relief together with a scheme for its reorganisation.

Part VI. deals with the Able-bodied and Unemployment.

Part VII. relates to charity and a scheme for the reorganisation of voluntary effort.

Part VIII. is devoted to miscellaneous subjects, such as Settlement, Invalidity, Insurance, Bastardy, &c.

Part IX. contains in a condensed form some of the principal arguments and the principal recommendations in the report.

The parts of the report which will probably attract most attention are Part IV., which contains the Commissioners' criticisms of the existing Poor Law system ; Part V., which similarly criticises the existing system of medical relief, and contains a plan for its reorganisation ; Part VI., which contains far-reaching proposals in connection with distress due to unemployment ; and Part IX., which, as we have already said, develops and summarises the arguments and proposals in the earlier parts of the report.

The recommendations occupy 24 printed folio pages and number over 250. They go into considerable detail as to the treatment of various classes of paupers and in other directions, and it is impossible within our available space to quote or even refer to a large number of them.

We, therefore, confine ourselves principally to the recommendations which will probably attract most attention, viz., those which propose either to set up new institutions or authorities or to remodel old ones.

THE NEW LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

If we deal first with the local machinery for the administration of the reformed Poor Law, which the Commission call the System of Public Assistance, it will be found that the root idea is the transfer of the functions of boards of guardians to a new local authority, called the public assistance authority, which would have for its area the county or county borough, and be a statutory committee of the council of the county or county borough. Each public assistance authority will do the more detailed work (such as the hearing of applications for assistance, &c.) by means of nominated local committees called public assistance committees, which will work in the existing union areas.

The public assistance authority will be a statutory committee of the county or county borough council constituted as follows :

(i.) One-half of the members to be appointed by the council of the county or county borough, and the persons so appointed may be persons who are members of the council.

(ii.) The other half of the members to be appointed by the council from outside their number, and to consist of persons experienced in the local administration of public assistance or other cognate work.

(iii.) The actual number of members of the public assistance authority, in each case and from time to time, to be determined by the Local Government Board, after consideration of a scheme submitted on the first occasion by the council of the county or county borough, and on subsequent occasions by the public assistance authority.

(iv.) Women to be eligible for appointment under either head (i.) or (ii.).

The public assistance committee will be appointed by the public assistance authority, and will include—

A certain proportion of persons nominated by the urban and rural district councils, and, where a voluntary aid committee has been established, a certain proportion nominated by that committee. The persons so nominated shall be experienced in the local administration of public assistance or other cognate work, and shall include a proportion of women, in our judgment not ordinarily less than one-third. One-third of the members shall retire each year, but shall be eligible for reappointment.

SCHEME FOR LONDON.

The above scheme would be applied to London, with the following modifications :—

(a) The area for the new public assistance authority would be that of the London County Council. The areas of the public assistance committees would generally be the areas of the existing unions, though in certain cases some readjustment would be necessary.

(b) The public assistance authority for London would be a statutory committee of the London County Council, with statutory duties.

(c) One-half of the members of the statutory committee to be nominated by the London County Council, either from their own number or from outside.

(d) One-quarter of the members of the statutory committee to be appointed by the London County Council from outside their own number, and to consist of persons of skill and experience in the administration of public assistance or other cognate work.

(e) One-quarter of the members of the statutory committee to be nominated by the Local Government Board so as to secure representation on the committee of such interests as the medical and legal professions, employers and working men, hospital administration, charitable organisations, &c.

(f) The London public assistance committees will be constituted as in the county, except that nominees of the metropolitan borough councils will be substituted for nominees of urban and rural district councils.

It is also proposed that Poor Law expenditure in London be a uniform charge over the whole area according to rateable value.

NEW PRINCIPLES INVOLVED.

It will be seen that the new scheme of local authorities involves three main principles :

- (1) The abolition of boards of guardians.
- (2) The enlargement of the Poor Law area from the union to the county or county borough.
- (3) The adoption of the principle of direct appointment in place of the principle of direct election. The members of the public assistance authorities are not to be directly elected *ad hoc* by the voters, but are to be directly appointed by existing local authorities, partly from among members of such authorities, and partly from among persons with special qualifications.

As these are three basic principles of the report, it is well to set out at some length the arguments in favour of them.

THE CASE FOR THE ABOLITION OF BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

The case for reform opens by a statistical survey of the discouraging results of a generation of effort under the *regime* of boards of guardians.

We take first the test of numbers. The Local Government Board returns show that the mean number of paupers in 1906, 1907, and 1908 was at a higher level than it had been for 31 years. Excluding, however, these last three bad years, the report divides up the period 1871-1906 into four cycles. Cycle (A), 1871-1880; cycle (B), 1880-1888; cycle (C), 1888-1896; cycle (D), 1896-1906.

Comparing the last cycle with the first, it is true that the mean number of paupers has fallen by 29,000, and that there are nine per 1,000 of the population fewer paupers than in the earlier cycle. But this reduction in the rate and numbers has taken place almost entirely during the earlier years of the period under review. If we omit the first cycle and take into account only the last three, we find that throughout the period 1896-1906 there were 24,000 paupers more than in the period 1888-96, and 7,000 more than in the period 1880-1888.

Further examination even diminishes the meagre consolation these figures afford as to the results of a generation of effort at reducing pauperism. Comparing the period 1896-1906 with 1871-80, there has been a decrease of 3.9 per cent. in the total number of paupers, but this decrease has been accompanied by a large increase of male pauperism and is due entirely to the large decrease in the number of children, whose numbers have decreased by 18 per cent., and a small reduction in the number of women, whose numbers have decreased by 2 per cent. The decrease in these two classes so affects the total as entirely to conceal an absolute increase of 18 per cent. in the number of male paupers. Even

in regard to the children, at any rate during the last 15 years, the decrease has been almost wholly in rural unions, and in the children of widows, and there has been a general increase in the number of children of able-bodied men.

Further, so far as figures are available, they show a greater proportionate increase in the number of paupers during the working years of life than in the very young or the very old. Taking only the able-bodied in health, we find that in the period 1896-1906 in metropolitan unions the indoor paupers have increased by 38 per cent. and the outdoor by 137 per cent.; in urban unions the indoor by 24 per cent. and the outdoor by 133 per cent.; and in the whole of England and Wales the indoor by 21 per cent. and the outdoor by 49 per cent.

In London alone 15,800 more paupers are being maintained than in the eighties, and the rate per 1,000 of the population, which used to be below that for England and Wales, has risen above it.

GROWTH OF EXPENDITURE.

Turning next to expenditure, the tale is almost more doleful. In the year 1871-2 the Poor Law expenditure was some eight millions; in the year 1905-6 it had amounted to 14 millions.

Summing up the general situation in regard to the increase in expenditure, we find that, whilst the expenditure per inhabitant has increased from 7s. 0½d. to 8s. 2¾d. since 1871-2, and is only 7½d. less than it was in 1834, the expenditure per pauper has increased from £7 12s. 1d. to £15 12s. 6d. in the same period. The country is maintaining a multitude of paupers not far short of the numbers maintained in 1871-2, and is spending more than double the amount upon each individual. The increased expenditure has done little towards diminishing the extent of pauperism. Such advance as the nation has made has been accomplished at an enormous cost, and absorbs an annual amount which is now equivalent to nearly one-half of the present expenditure upon the Army. It may be urged that the rate of pauperism has diminished from 31·2 per 1,000 in 1871-9 to 22·2 per 1,000 in 1896-1905, and this is certainly a matter for congratulation, but it has been the result of the large increase in the population rather than of any considerable reduction in the number of paupers.

This discouraging result has occurred notwithstanding the fact that we are spending 20 millions more in education than in 1831, and 13 millions more in sanitation and the prevention of disease than in 1841, notwithstanding the fact "that money wages in the nineties were 10 per cent. above those of the eighties, and 30 per cent. above those of the sixties," and notwithstanding the fact that "there has been a considerable flow of the working classes from the lower paid occupations to the higher paid industries."

It is very unpleasant to record that, notwithstanding our assumed moral and material progress, and notwithstanding the enormous annual expenditure, amounting to nearly 60 millions a year, upon poor relief, education, and public health, we still have a vast army of persons quartered upon us unable to support themselves, and an army which in numbers has recently shown signs of increase rather than decrease. To what is the retrogression due? It cannot be attributed to lack of expenditure. Is this costly and elaborate machinery we have established defective, and, if so, where does it fail to accomplish its end?

The statistical review of the expenditure incurred and of the results attained by it prove that something in our social organisation is seriously wrong, and that whatever may be the evils, they are not of such a nature as to be improved or removed by the mere signing of cheques or the outpouring of public funds.

THE GUARDIANS AND THEIR POLICY.

The case for the supersession of boards of guardians is next taken up in Chapter 2 of Part IV., where it is contended that the direct election of

guardians in small areas does not produce a sufficient supply of qualified administrators.

Persons who are not qualified even to vote at a Parliamentary or county council election may be elected as guardians on a franchise wider than either the Parliamentary or county council franchise. Twelve months' residence in a parish is a sufficient qualification for a person to be elected as a guardian, and provided a man has this qualification, he may have been a pauper or a mendicant, and the law will still pronounce him qualified to be elected as a guardian. Moreover, it is technically possible for such a person, who pays no rates himself, to be elected to this position of high responsibility by voters, many of whom themselves pay no rates directly and have, therefore, no immediate interest in nor knowledge of the amount of expenditure which is placed upon the ratepayers. Or, even worse, the voters may themselves be prospective claimants for relief, and that from a board which they know will be favourably prejudiced towards their claims, as instance the board of guardians who acquiesced in the following view :

" We are sent here to give outdoor relief to our relations, our fathers and our mothers, and our sisters, and our cousins, and our uncles, and our aunts, and if we did not do it we should very soon be sent about our business."

It seems clear to us that so long as such a state of affairs is even remotely possible the law itself provides no guarantee whatever that responsible and proper persons shall be elected as guardians.

The following extracts indicate what unsatisfactory classes of persons are sometimes elected as guardians :

Cases have been brought to our knowledge in which guardians have been administering relief to those on whom they rely for support in their business, as customers or tenants. Scarcely more creditable is the case of those who seek election as guardians with a view to the patronage which the distribution of relief confers.

It is found that in many places guardians are still interested chiefly in administering relief to their near neighbours, while the publicity given to their work by means of newspaper reports makes them even more liable to undue pressure from their constituents. Electioneering literature shows how easy it is to fall into the dangerous practice of courting popularity by promises of relief on easy terms.

If the establishment of central control had resulted, as the Royal Commission of 1832 desired, in withdrawing " all local discretionary power as to relief," such electioneering promises would be futile ; but a study of the relief given in different unions shows how great a discretionary power is still exercised by local administrators, and, undoubtedly, the wideness of that power does make it possible for an elected guardian to fulfil to some extent his election pledges. The class of applicants who have no chance of receiving outdoor relief in one union may get it easily and as a matter of course in another. In one union outdoor relief will not be granted unless the applicants have sufficient independent means to pay their rent ; while in another union the very fact of earning or possessing any independent resources will be considered a bar to relief. Some guardians will not relieve the sick dependents of an able-bodied man at all unless the man himself comes into the workhouse, while other guardians make no effort whatever to exclude even the well-to-do classes from receiving gratuitously both indoor and outdoor medical relief. Innumerable instances of the existing lack of uniformity will be found throughout our evidence, and this diversity applies to every form of relief and to every class of applicant.

While we fully appreciate the advisability of allowing a certain elasticity in the treatment even of the same class of cases, it cannot, in our opinion, be justifiable that the divergence should involve so great a curtailment or extension of the privileges of paupers, far less that it should amount to an actual denial of the right to relief.

One result of entrusting such large discretionary powers to administrators not always properly qualified is that many boards in effect practise a policy of " parsimony tempered by patronage," while " in the towns there are indications that political motives govern the conduct of many of the guardians, who are often elected by the help of political organisations, with the result that, in contrast with the rural districts, extravagance, rather than parsimony, dominates their policy."

MISMANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS.

But, in addition to this want of uniformity, amounting almost to caprice, there is frequently a failure to appreciate the conditions under which

alone the difficult business of relief can be properly conducted in the board-room.

Eight instances are given of meetings attended by the Commissioners, from which we quote two :

We attended a meeting of the board. . . . The relieving officers and the chairman stated the cases so confusedly and so incompletely that it was almost impossible to form any opinion as to the methods by which out-relief is distributed, but we gathered that each guardian decided whether relief should be given to the applicants from the parish which he represented. The relieving officer was not consulted, nor was his statement of facts considered.

We were present at the relief committees. These are four in number. . . . It is not easy to convey any idea of their inefficiency. Three of them were held in close proximity—the shouting of the relieving officers, the banging of doors, made the scene a pandemonium. The procedure was as follows: The committee sat on one side of the counter, the relieving officer on the other with a pile of money beside him. He took names in order from the Application and Report Book (which seemed to be very fairly kept), summoned the applicant, stated the facts of the case, allotted the relief, and handed it to the applicant, at the same time giving a card to the chairman of the committee for endorsement. By this method 13 cases were decided in one committee in four minutes.

These reports are the more impressive when it is remembered that the boards visited would in all probability be anxious to exhibit their best capabilities for business in the presence of the Commissioners.

It is not contended, however, that the administration is universally bad. On the contrary, the Commissioners say: "We welcome the opportunity of putting on record our high appreciation of the steadfastness and wisdom which have marked the work of many boards. But there is at present no adequate means of raising the standard of work to this high level, nor of ensuring that the condition of things to be found in many unions shall be impossible for the future."

INDOOR RELIEF.

How bad that condition of things can be in the spheres of indoor and outdoor relief, the following extracts will show.

As regards indoor relief, we quote three from among a number of reports on workhouses which appear in the text of the Report.

We found about 100 men in two rooms, respectively described as the "reading-room" and the "smoke-room." Some of these men were asleep, others were reading, others smoking, playing dominoes or bagatelle, and others were doing nothing. In another room there were 28 aged men of a better class who have the room to themselves, but occupy the same dormitory as the others. In one dormitory (which had been cut off the chapel) there were no fewer than 50 beds. In one of the women's day-rooms about 40 women were sitting listlessly, with nothing whatever to do but gossip and sleep. . . . But the most lamentable feature of the — Workhouse was the inadequacy of the work provided for the inmates. Three-fourths of the men found in the "smoke-room" and "reading-room" were equal to some work, and that they were occupied as they were at mid-afternoon was deplorable.

On the day of our visit there were 87 inmates, 51 men, 27 women, and nine children. There was no attempt at classification. Thus, young women, girls, infants, and old women were all using the same dormitory. The master and guardians apparently considered that this was inevitable, but in one case in which a small sleeping-room had been allotted for six old women, the next dormitory thereto was occupied by old women, young women, and girls, and as we pointed out, it would have been easy to have allotted the old women's room as a girls' dormitory. It seemed to us scandalous that local apathy should be allowed to condemn young girls to be put to sleep with women, admitted by the master to be frequently of bad character.

The whole condition of the workhouse reflects great discredit on the board of guardians; it is overcrowded and ill-managed, and the staff is inadequate. Indeed, the detailed administration seemed so incompetent as to be almost cruel.

Here again, however, the cases cited are not alleged to be typical of all workhouses. Indeed, a pleasant picture is given of some of the country workhouses.

Many of them, notably in the home counties, are picturesque old buildings, with pleasant gardens, and generally with 10 to 20 acres of ground attached on which the inmates are employed, according to their physical condition, in raising vegetables for the use of the institution. The old people who retire there towards the end of their lives do so gradually, going in through the winter, and coming out again in the summer when they can work a little in the hay-fields or make long visits to friends.

And even as regards town workhouses :

We have found here and there a large workhouse where the very best is made of a most difficult situation, and the ingenuity of the governing spirit contrives to keep everyone occupied and contented. In such cases, the workhouse tends to become a refuge where the fairly respectable but inefficient workman, or the man who can only keep sober under close supervision, may be made to contribute something towards his maintenance.

Another general defect in the administration of indoor relief is the absence of any intelligent revision of cases by boards of guardians.

It is impossible to make treatment ameliorative unless the attention of the responsible authorities is from time to time directed to individual cases with a view to seeing what form of curative treatment is best for them and how that treatment is progressing.

Such a periodical revision of institutional cases is, however, in the large majority of unions non-existent. Even with regard to children there is nothing in the existing regulations to prevent an orphan being sent away to some certified institution in a distant town, and growing there from a child into an adult, without the guardians who sent it having any report from the institution, or taking any further interest in the child's existence unless, or until, it dies, goes out to service, or is guilty of some gross misbehaviour.

But with regard to ordinary workhouse cases the absence of revision is still more striking. An order for out-relief is invariably given for a particular period, at the end of which the case must automatically come up before the guardians for revision if the relief is to be continued. But the necessity for assigning a period to an order for indoor relief is not generally recognised, except in rare instances, and consequently an order for the workhouse may, at the pauper's will, be an order for maintenance for life at the public cost. Wherever the expedient of a workhouse "call-over" has been undertaken by a revision committee numbers of such cases have been discovered, and instances have been known where the call-over has resulted in the discovery that certain indoor paupers only existed as such in the workhouse books, having in the body long since departed from the institution.

OUT-RELIEF.

If we turn to out-relief there is the same tale of deficient administration. Out-relief is given in doles without sufficient inquiry, and is generally inadequate in amount :

The existence of this deplorable, though happily not universal, practice of giving inadequate out-relief is referred to again and again in the reports of the diocesan inquiries as to poverty. A considerable number of incumbents report that outdoor relief in their parishes is so meagre as to cause positive suffering ; and cases are cited where the guardians' allowance is alleged to leave only 6d. a week for the recipient to live on after the rent is paid.

We shall speak more fully in dealing with particular classes of the results of this widespread system of trying to compensate for inadequacy of knowledge by inadequacy of relief. Two points, however, seem quite obvious—first, that when the applicants are honest in their statements they must often suffer great privation ; and, second, that when they are dishonest relief must often be given quite unnecessarily.

But further, in many instances the money of the ratepayers "is being applied to subsidise dirt, disease, and immorality." This assertion is supported by nine extracts from reports of committees of the Commission, of which we quote perhaps the three worst cases :

The worst case on the list was that of an old man, aged 65, living with prostitutes, who boarded and lodged him at 2s. 6d. a week. The committee granted this man (although he did not appear) 2s. 6d. a week, but he was warned he must move into a more respectable neighbourhood.

Mrs. W., a widow with five children, receives 10s. per week. She is a notorious drunkard, and has lately been turned out of a house in a street where drunkards abound

because her drunken habits disturbed the whole street. When we called she refused to open the door; the relieving officer concluded she was drunk.

A single woman lives with her sister and her husband in one room. She gets 4s. 6d. a week out-relief. It is a mystery where the single woman sleeps, as there is only one room and one bed. She makes up her living by making scones, which she retails; these are made under filthy conditions.

That the accounts of the Commissioners do not overstate the conditions which sometimes occur is corroborated by the following extracts from reports of the Local Government Board inspectors, who were especially asked by the Commission to conduct an investigation into the condition of persons in receipt of out-relief.

This class (Class C) contains those concerning whom the present inquiry is made. Too frequently they represent the most demoralised and diseased of the population. They include some epileptics, imbeciles, and cripples of the lowest class. Their homes are nearly always to be found in the poorest quarters where population is densest. Cleanliness and ventilation are not considered of any account. The furniture is always of the most dilapidated kind. The beds generally consist of dirty palliasses or mattresses with very scanty covering. The atmosphere is offensive, even fetid, and the clothing of the individuals, old and young, is ragged and filthy. Bankrupt in pocket and character, this class look to the rates to support them, and are never backward in making application. The children are neglected, furnish the complaints of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children inspectors, and fill the homes of the guardians. The men are drunkards, gamblers, work-shy corner boys, and often criminals. The women are too often immoral, as well as unclean and neglectful. Souteneurs may be included in this class. . . . It is impossible with the present powers to deal satisfactorily with the various subsections of it which come before the guardians and the sanitary authorities. The guardians feel forced to give relief to bad cases because of the children, or for fear of some allegation of want of consideration to destitute ruffians or drunkards. It will be seen from the notes on each case that the conditions are very often bad indeed, and are quite incompatible with decent living for the adults, or with a respectable and healthful upbringing of the children where they exist.

There is no doubt whatever that a large number of the outdoor paupers are living in an environment of filth and immorality, and in many cases I fear they are participants in, and abettors of, these foul, insanitary, and degrading conditions. . . . I found far too much intemperance and sometimes even drunkenness in cases to which relief was being granted. . . . Close allied to it, and as a rule the fruits of it, were filth, both of person and surroundings, and sadder even was the neglect and resultant cruelty to children, who were ill-fed and ill-clad. . . . During the periodical visits of the relieving officer I consider that each room in a dwelling should be thoroughly inspected, for frequently I found that though the living-room might be fairly clean, the rest of the house was a mass of filth, the bedding dirty, a heap of ill-smelling rags for bed clothes, and the atmosphere vile and vicious. In some instances even the living-room was a disgrace to humanity.

The Commission points out, however :

Stress is laid by the general inspectors upon the point that these unhappy conditions are exceptional, and we are prepared from our own experience to corroborate this view. But the fact remains that they occur with sufficient frequency to be a very potent influence in perpetuating pauperism and propagating disease.

We have now said enough to show that the Commission's report, though recognising the good work in some unions, is a heavy indictment of mismanagement and abuses which occur in the administration of relief by boards of guardians.

THE CASE FOR THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE POOR LAW AREA.

EVILS OF THE GENERAL WORKHOUSE.

We have already dealt with the allegation that the small area does not supply sufficient of the right class of administrators. In addition, Part IV., Chapter 4, of the Report is devoted to showing that the union area is too small for the purpose of providing proper institutional treatment. A small area means a "general workhouse," and the general

workhouse must go. In 1832 the Poor Law area was increased from the parish to the union in the hope of abolishing the general workhouse and ensuring separate institutions being established for the different classes of paupers.

This proposal for separate institutions for separate classes was, however, never carried out, and consequently those evils persisted which are inherent in the general workhouse system (*i.e.*, a system which attempts to deal with many different classes of paupers in one building or in one curtilage under one management).

As early as 1861 a Select Committee of the House of Commons found that the workhouses were in many cases insufficient for the proper classification of the inmates, and they drew special attention to the evils arising from the lack of separation between respectable and dissolute females, and from the association of children with adults in the sick-wards. . . . The number of single female inmates seems to have largely increased since 1861, but it is only in a small minority of workhouses that there is any attempt to keep the better young women from contamination by the depraved. Both in the dining-hall and in the sick-wards of many workhouses there is opportunity for the children to come in contact with the adults.

Indeed, as a result of our evidence and our visits we have been impressed, as the Royal Commission of 1832 was, with the great difficulty of proper classification and treatment by classes so long as the present general workhouse continues to exist.

As to the results of workhouse life on the inmates the Report quotes the following amongst other evidence. The chaplain of a London workhouse says :

After an experience of some 12 years there is no doubt in my mind that life in the workhouse deteriorates mentally, morally, and physically the habitual inmates. Indeed, the life of these people is better described as more or less a miserable existence than a life. It must be admitted that the mental capacity of the average person who drifts into the workhouse is of a low order, but nevertheless I have seen in countless instances a gradual deterioration of intellect owing to the lack of almost all incentive to use the brain. The inmate finds at very least the necessities of life, and in many places far more than the necessities of life, provided for him with scarcely any thought or effort on his part, and in the majority of cases the sole ideas that fill the mind are to get as much to eat and as much sleep and as large an amount of immunity from even the lightest task as possible. . . . A large number of cases has come under my notice of young persons of both sexes who on their first admission to the workhouse have felt their position and surroundings most keenly, and yet in a very short space of time have found the life so congenial and free from responsibility and need of exertion that they made no effort to leave it, and after their discharge return to it as soon as possible. I have also seen many young people admitted who were at first bright and willing to perform their light duties, but who, under the influence of their associates, soon grew lazy and unwilling to do anything, though physically well able to work. Then follow short sentences for refusing to perform their tasks, and soon they become incorrigible rogues and vagabonds, and the result is—the habitual criminal. Again, the ill-effect of the increasing tendency to make the life easier and to increase the dietary and general comfort of the inmate is shown in the increasing number of admissions to those who, earning wages for a portion of the year outside, place their money in safe keeping and enter the workhouse regularly for periods of rest at the ratepayers' expense. I have come across many such cases : such people easily learn to complain of mysterious weaknesses, aches, and pains which are hard to disprove, the supposed possession of which entitles them to the best of fare and medical comforts which the institution has to offer. In conclusion, the rapidly growing opinion amongst the poorer classes seems to be expressed by the remark of a man to me last week. "So long as I can get 16 ounces of pie for my dinner and my two children kept for life, and they don't ask me to do any more than polish the stair-banisters, I'm not going to work."

The Commission continue :

The evidence cannot be resisted that, for those past childhood, workhouse life is liable to have an actually deteriorating effect. This is especially true of those who are still quite young when brought into association with degraded characters. It is partly the great size to which some of these institutions have grown which makes it impossible to deal with all classes of inmates in a suitable way. But the difficulty mainly arises out of the attempt to deal in one institution, under one master, with

people requiring such very different treatment as the infirm and the able-bodied, the old and the young, the feeble-minded, epileptic, insane, and those of bad character.

Such being the dangers of the general workhouse system, it is not a little distressing to find what a large number of paupers are still maintained in workhouses.

From the table given in the footnote on page 599 of the Report it would appear that in March, 1906, in England and Wales, 186,791 paupers, or 74 per cent. of those in receipt of indoor relief, were in workhouses as distinct from institutions under separate management, whilst in the country the proportion rose to 95 per cent. These figures, of course, only relate to a one-day count, and if we take into consideration the numbers relieved in the course of a year, it is not improbable that upwards of 250,000 souls are, more or less, exposed to the undesirable influences of the general workhouse.

The conclusion of the Commission is :

The difficulty can only be met by setting apart special institutions for special classes, as was intended by the Royal Commission of 1832 ; so that it may be possible to deal humanely with the aged, without thereby attracting the young ; and so that the able-bodied loafer may be kept under strict discipline and not allowed to lose the power of work. It is mainly with a view to facilitating this specialisation of treatment that we have recommended the enlargement of areas.

THE CASE FOR THE DIRECT APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIANS.

In support of this proposal the report points out the apathy of voters in regard to Poor Law elections. In London only 28 per cent. of the electorate poll, and three times fewer votes are recorded at the guardians' elections than at the Parliamentary elections. In the country the position seems much the same.

This general indifference to Poor Law elections has the marked disadvantage that the constituency is always open to capture by any party which is prepared to throw a little energy into the matter ; and the whole policy of a board may be reversed by a single election. It often happens that candidates are " run " by the different political associations of the district, sometimes with no other object than to try the relative strength of the political parties. Moreover, occasionally, a whole board of guardians may be turned out on grounds wholly unconnected with Poor Law—*e.g.*, a question connected with the vaccination laws. In Poor Law administration this liability to change is peculiarly disastrous. It is only by experience that guardians learn wisdom in administration, and to have a new set of guardians every three years means that both the poor and the ratepayers suffer from the constantly renewed mistakes of inexperienced administrators, and that the best class of officials are discouraged.

We have already dealt with the evil resulting from the pressure upon guardians from their constituents, but the need for some new method of selecting guardians is well summed up in the following paragraph :

It is not a class question in any sense ; as one witness tells us, " It is not a question of the social *status* of the guardians, still less of wealth or poverty. I have known some of the best guardians the poorest, and *vice versa*." But it is a question of choosing from whatever class in the community, experienced, thoughtful, and, above all, disinterested men and women to perform a most important public service. We believe that there are many such men and women quite prepared to give the service who will not face a popular election carried on under the present conditions, and who, in particular, will not make the promises of liberal relief which are so potent in an election and so fatal to good administration. At present there is no doubt that the work of boards of guardians has fallen into disrepute, and nothing short of a determined effort will restore it to the esteem which it deserves. As a step towards this we shall recommend that in future the members of the local authority shall be largely nominated from amongst men and women of experience, wisdom, and unselfish devotion to the public good. It is hoped that many of the evils alluded to will then disappear, and the way be prepared for a disinterested and progressive administration.

This completes the main argument of the Commission in support of their new scheme of local authorities, the enlargement of the Poor Law area, and the abolition of the general workhouse.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SCHEME OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AUTHORITIES.

It may be claimed for this new organisation of Public Assistance Authorities that it will link up the Poor Law with the other services of local government, and thus do away with the aloofness between Poor Law and municipal life, which has in the past permitted the growth of apathy both in administrators and electorate. The ultimate control of the electorate over the expenditure and proceedings of the new Authority will be preserved ; but there will be no danger of undue pressure being placed by constituents upon guardians directly elected for the purpose of giving relief. The new scheme should enlist the service of many capable social workers who are unwilling to go through the storm and stress of election. It will divide the work of Public Assistance into two classes—

- (1) Central supervision and organisation, and—
- (2) Local case-work and investigation,

and will thus enable the men most competent for each class of work to come forward and give their services in the common work of Public Assistance. Local interest in the local poor and in local institutions will be maintained by means of the Public Assistance Committees. The economy and efficiency of central supervision and control will be attained by means of the Public Assistance Authorities.

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMED POOR LAW.

The report summarises as follows the main principles upon which the new Public Assistance Authorities are to act :

- (1) The treatment of the poor who apply for Public Assistance should be adapted to the needs of the individual, and, if institutional, should be governed by classification.
- (2) The public administration established for the assistance of the poor should work in co-operation with the local and private charities of the district.
- (3) The system of Public Assistance thus established should include processes of help which would be preventive, curative, and restorative.
- (4) Every effort should be made to foster the instincts of independence and self-maintenance amongst those assisted.

Of these principles perhaps the most important are those which insist on the individual treatment of each case, and of each class of cases, with a view to restoring to independence the persons treated. It is pointed out that the principle of restoration is alien to the system of poor relief established by the Report of the Royal Commission of 1834. The Commissioners of that date expressly stated that the system they proposed was intended “ to produce negative rather than positive effects,” and that they did not look to it for the general “ diffusion of right principles and habits.”

By contrast the Royal Commission of 1909 intend their system of Public Assistance to be based on the positive principles of curative and restorative treatment. “ *Laissez faire, laissez défaire* ” is not to be the motto of the new system.

What, however, is to be the precise nature of this restorative treatment is not always explained. But the keynote is the individual treatment of cases and classes of cases. The proposal, in fact, is to substitute individual treatment for mass treatment.

This object cannot, however, be achieved until a proper scheme of classification of cases is carried out. It is only by specialising that the nature and remedy of diseases, whether physical or industrial, can be ascertained. The hope of the future system of Public Assistance would, therefore, seem to be that by dealing separately with separate classes of cases and by individual treatment of persons in those classes, it will be possible to develop and apply restorative treatment to a greater extent than has been possible before.

THE ORGANISATION OF VOLUNTARY AID.

Side by side and in co-operation with the new Public Assistance Authorities and Public Assistance Committees, it is proposed to set up councils of voluntary aid and voluntary aid committees which shall be recognised by statute and by the local authorities as the local centres of charitable and voluntary effort.

It is pointed out :

The charities of the country, endowed and voluntary, represent a very large force and considerable means, which are at the disposal of the community for the relief of distress. Many of them have the services of skilled and experienced workers. Their aggregate income is great. They are centres at which groups of persons of many kinds and classes are brought into direct communication with those who are in need or distress ; and their aims and methods indicate generally what are the thoughts and conceptions of the people in regard to charitable relief. Men and women, so far as they learn to consider and deal with the problem of relief seriously, find their training and guidance in part, no doubt, at boards of guardians, but chiefly in connection with these bodies. Every year new foundations are established, and large amounts are bequeathed as endowments or left by bequest to voluntary institutions. The force represented by the charities is thus a growing force, which is affecting the well-being of the recipient classes in many ways for good or for evil.

In London alone the income of the charitable agencies dealing with the material needs of the poor amounts to over 7½ millions, but—

As in the case of Poor Law administration, and especially in the distribution of outdoor relief, we have found great varieties of practice and sometimes a slipshod and purposeless giving which was altogether wasteful and very injurious ; so in the case of the charities we have found instances of quite useless and ineffective gifts. The charities, both endowed and voluntary, are often checked and hampered by regulation, tradition, and procedure in such a way as to render them, like the boards of guardians, self-centred and exclusive. They are not regarded and utilised as parts of a common organisation, though, however scattered and disconnected they appear, they have by intention been created to fulfil what is, after all, a common social purpose in many ways and subject to many differences. They continue to exist just as they have come into existence, individual entities, each independent of the other, each fulfilling in separation its larger or lesser functions. They do not exchange information and have no common centre of inquiry and registration, except in so far as in some towns they may use the facilities which are placed at their disposal by charity organisation committees. They stand aloof from each other and from the Poor Law, and the Poor Law from them.

Moreover, it appears that the causes of distress are largely moral, and with such moral causes, voluntary institutions, well equipped as they are with earnest, voluntary service, are specially adapted to deal.

OBSTACLES TO THE RIGHT USE OF CHARITABLE EFFORT.

But there are at present many obstacles to the right use of charities and voluntary effort for the relief of distress. Taking first the endowed eleemosynary charities, £325,812, or nearly one-third of their total annual income of £991,959, is apparently distributed in doles—*i.e.*, in small sums or gifts. As to these dole charities, it is shown that—

The doles fell to many of the unjust, and to some of the just. They came to drinking and immoral people living in dirty homes, to the lazy and disreputable, to people quite well enough off to do without them ; to old almspeople who were already in receipt of a pension, or had a place in an almshouse ; to widows of good, bad, or indifferent

character; to steady and well-doing people, and to thriving families. They were indiscriminate. They promoted dependence among the independent, and palliated demoralisation, and did little or nothing to ameliorate a state of poverty, or prevent a state of distress.

And reports sent in to the Commission from the various dioceses teem with instances of the injurious effect of the doles.

Moreover, the large number and small size of these charities are obstacles to their efficient administration on common principles. For example, in the diocese of Ely alone, there are 935 separate trusts administering a total income of £22,000.

A separate organisation for managing every £20 of the income! But even that is not the worst. A great number of these trusts have an income of from £3 to 15s., sums not large enough to effect any solid good, yet quite large enough to be the objects of intrigue and the causes of much jealousy and ill-feeling. Only if the administrators are both entirely wise and entirely trusted by the people can the distribution of such funds be innocuous.

But the reaction against the abuses of dole charities has led to their, perhaps, unjustifiable diversion to other purposes. Thus, there has been diverted over a quarter of a million of capital and over £50,000 of annual income to educational and other non-cleemosynary purposes.

Turning to the voluntary charities, it is pointed out that they are exempt from any semblance of control, supervision, or guidance towards a common end by the Charity Commission. Yet, notwithstanding, many of them, with large funds invested in property, have elements of perpetuity which make them in this sense almost indistinguishable from endowed charities. Nor, except where there happens to be an efficient charity organisation society, have either voluntary or endowed charities any common local centre for inquiry, registration, or co-operation.

Lastly, much of the charitable money of to-day, instead of being used to prevent pauperism, is being used to subsidise pauperism. It appears from the diocesan reports that the practice of supplementing doles of out-relief with doles of charity is most common. Experience has again and again shown that this division of responsibility as between charity and the Poor Law in regard to the same cases is unsatisfactory. Either each agency assumes that the other is properly looking after the case, with the result that the case is inadequately relieved, or else each agency relieves without regard to what the other is giving, with the result that the case receives more assistance than is required. A dual responsibility for the same case may thus be either wasteful or cruel.

SCHEME OF VOLUNTARY AID.

As a remedy for all these evils it is proposed thoroughly to reorganise the service of charity, locally by co-ordinating its efforts in voluntary aid councils and committees, and centrally by widening the powers and initiative of the Charity Commission. In order to ensure local co-operation between voluntary effort and public assistance, members of the voluntary aid committee are to sit on the public assistance committee and members of the public assistance authority on the voluntary aid council. A similar central co-operation will be effected by affiliating the Charity Commission to the Local Government Board, and making the President of that Board responsible in Parliament for the Commission.

The need for such a scheme is well summarised in the following passages:

We are convinced, and the evidence has, in our opinion, amply shown, that the charities should be brought into the field of public work and responsibility, and that, expressly or tacitly, obligations should be imposed on them which are consistent with

the purposes for which they were established ; and we believe that if they are pressed and stimulated to fulfil these purposes vigorously in accordance with some accepted scheme of co-ordination, they will in their degree form a very real and effectual barrier to want and distress.

Accordingly it is proposed to establish a "widespread auxiliary federation of voluntary effort, which, working parallel to the official administration of poor relief, may assist the community very materially in the relief of the poor, the promotion of health and independence, and in much other cognate work."

The essential details of the proposed auxiliary federation of voluntary aid will be found in the following recommendations :

CONSTITUTION OF VOLUNTARY AID COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES.

(173) That in the area of each Public Assistance Authority, that is, in each county or county borough, there be formed a Voluntary Aid Council, consisting in part of trustees of endowed charities, of members of registered voluntary charities, as defined below, of some members of the Public Assistance Authority, and of such persons as members of friendly societies and trade associations, of clergy and ministers and of other persons, being co-opted members, as may be settled in schemes approved by the Charities Commission.

(174) That a statutory obligation be imposed upon the lord lieutenants, the chairmen of county councils, the lord mayors, and mayors of county boroughs to take steps within a given period, and after consultation with the managers of charitable societies and members of the Public Assistance Authority, for drawing up schemes in accordance with the preceding recommendation, which schemes must be submitted to the Charities Commission for approval.

(175) That the Voluntary Aid Council submit to the Charities Commission proposals for the formation of Voluntary Aid Committees to be drawn up in the form of schemes to be approved by the Commission and that the Voluntary Aid Council under such schemes appoint as members of the Voluntary Aid Committees persons such as those mentioned in Recommendation 1.

(176) That voluntary societies, as defined in Recommendation 189, be entitled to register at the Charities Commission on lines similar to those of the registration of friendly societies under the Friendly Societies Act.

(177) That a registered voluntary society be entitled to nominate members of its own body for appointment to the Voluntary Aid Council and to the Voluntary Aid Committee of the district in which either its institution or any branch of its institution has an office.

(178) That it is desirable that the Voluntary Aid Committee have its offices in the same buildings as the Committees of Public Assistance.

FUNCTIONS OF VOLUNTARY AID COUNCIL.

(179) The duties of the Voluntary Aid Councils would be for the most part not executive, but supervisory. The executive work would be assigned to the Voluntary Aid Committees. The Voluntary Aid Council would supervise the operations of these committees generally, and would, as far as possible, maintain the same principles of help and relief throughout county or county boroughs. They would collect funds for distribution to Voluntary Aid Committees, and they would allocate funds to poor districts. The county is already the accepted area for many benevolent and philanthropic purposes. The local infirmary or hospital is frequently a county institution. There are county nursing associations, and the county is the recognised centre in connection with various naval and military charitable associations. We propose that the Voluntary Aid Council acting for the county should promote any voluntary institutions, societies, or associations for which the county, as a whole, has need. Its duties would thus be important and distinctive.

FUNCTIONS OF VOLUNTARY AID COMMITTEE.

(180) That the Voluntary Aid Committee assist (1) persons in distress whose cases do not appear to be suitable for treatment by the Public Assistance Committee, and (2) applicants for public assistance whose cases have been referred to the committee by the Public Assistance Committee.

(181) That, with a view to the thorough treatment of individual cases, the Voluntary Aid Committee make such arrangements for the investigation of the applications made to them as the Charities Commission may deem necessary and sufficient.

(182) That in dealing with persons in distress for whom it is desired to provide assistance by way of monetary relief, it shall be the duty of the Voluntary Aid

Committee to obtain such sums as may be possible from relations of the applicant, from friends, and from charitable sources generally for the assistance of individual cases.

(183) That with the administration of relief on the part of the Voluntary Aid Committee there should be associated such a system of voluntary visitation as the committee may deem advisable in view of the responsibilities of their work in providing effectual assistance, and in view of the physical needs and the habits of those whom they decide to assist.

(184) That the Voluntary Aid Committee be empowered to appoint such local committees as it may deem necessary, subject to the approval of the Voluntary Aid Council.

(185) That a Voluntary Aid Committee shall, as far as possible, register the cases dealt with by the Public Assistance Committee and by the charitable societies and institutions in the district.

(186) That Voluntary Aid Committees receive the support of the Public Assistance Committee and of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, with a view to systematising the relations between the Public Assistance and Voluntary Aid Committees and promoting co-operation between them.

(187) That Voluntary Aid Councils or Committees be eligible for subscriptions from the Public Assistance Authority, on the lines of 42 and 43 Viet., c. 54, Section 10.

CHARITIES COMMISSION.

(188) That the Charity Commission be attached to the Local Government Board, and that the Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners, permanent or temporary, be appointed by the Local Government Board, whose President should represent it in the House of Commons.

(189) That the Charity Commission be enlarged, and that there be assigned to it two departments of work, the supervision of endowed charities on the lines of the Charitable Trusts Acts, and the registration of voluntary charities or societies which hold any property in land or houses, by purchase, or by leasehold, or are the tenants of any property under yearly or other agreements.

(190) That the name of the Charity Commission be the Charities Commission.

(191) That the staff of the Commission be strengthened so as to fulfil all the various additional duties that may devolve upon them :

(i.) As a centre for the registration of voluntary charities.

(ii.) In assisting in the preparation of schemes for the establishment of Voluntary Aid Councils and for registering such schemes.

(iii.) In assisting in the preparation of schemes for the establishment of Voluntary Aid Committees and for registering and supervising their administration.

(iv.) In the scrutiny of accounts and statements relating to Voluntary Aid Councils and Committees.

(v.) In the supervision of other schemes : and

(vi.) In the scrutiny of the accounts of endowed and registered charities.

(192) That section 30 of the Endowed School Act, 1869, by which certain charities founded for purposes of relief may be applied to purposes of education, be repealed.

(193) That it be provided in a statute amending the Charitable Trusts Acts that, by order of the Charities Commission, any charities, as defined in section 30 of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869, exclusive of loan charities, apprenticeship charities, and charities for advancement in life, may be used for the relief of distress, subject to such conditions respecting inquiry and other matters as the Commissioners may determine under a general order.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

There is but little direct criticism or praise of the Local Government Board in the Report. Apart from an occasional cry of unnecessary control in matters of detail, little or no local evidence is cited by way of complaint against the Central department. There appears, however, to be a general feeling amongst Poor Law Guardians that they have suffered from a lack of guidance from the Local Government Board on matters of principle, and the Commission report : " We strongly endorse the opinion that it is desirable for the Central Authority in future to assume a more direct position of guidance and initiative in regard to the Local Authorities." It is proposed that the control of the new system shall be in the hands of a separate " Public Assistance Division " of the Local Government Board, and in order to make the policy and intentions of the Central department

clear, it is recommended that all its orders and circulars should be codified and consolidated, and that a small manual of instructions for the guidance of Local Authorities should be issued from time to time containing a clear exposition of the policy of the Local Government Board. The Commission evidently think that the position of the department should be strengthened in every way. "Its *status* does not seem adequate considering its importance, and we are in accord with the proposal to raise the salary and *status* of the head of the Local Government Board to that of a Secretary of State."

Although it is hoped that the Board may be able to devolve a certain number of its minor functions upon the new local authorities, yet :—

The enormous mass of administrative questions brought within its cognisance upon subjects which do not brook of delay, gives to the higher officials insufficient time for the study of new and perplexing problems as they arise and come up before them. The volume and importance of such questions are on the increase. We feel it, therefore, of great importance that the staff of the Office should be adequately increased so as to relieve the permanent secretary and the higher officials of the undue strain which the present conditions often impose upon them. These considerations are of special weight at a time when it is proposed to reorganise the whole service of Public Assistance.

With a view to increasing the prestige and effectiveness of the Inspectors and Auditors, qualifications are laid down for them and an increase in their staff is suggested, so as to enable them properly to cope with their work. Amongst minor additional powers to be given to the Central Authority is one to compel the Local Authorities to provide proper institutions, and another to enable the Local Government Board to themselves, if necessary, carry on the work of a defaulting Local Authority.

EXCHEQUER GRANTS IN AID OF LOCAL TAXATION.

By far the most important of the proposed additions to the powers of the Local Government Board is, however, contained in the recommendation that the Exchequer grants should be raised to £5,000,000, and that the Board should have the power to withhold the whole or part of these grants in cases where administration of the new Authorities is not efficient :—

176. Boards of Guardians are now, therefore, receiving from the County and County Borough Councils an annual contribution to the cost of the Poor Law of a sum which in 1905-6 amounted in the aggregate to £2,264,000, apart from the grant of £500,000 under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896. Although a great part of the grants was originally intended by Parliament to "contribute to the improvement of particular services," and the grants are generally in fact still connected by name with particular Poor Law purposes, it is worthy of note, and we emphasise the fact, that these grants cannot be withheld by the Central Authority on account of any deficiency or default in the local administration. It follows therefore that this vast sum of money is practically an unconditional grant to the Local Authorities in aid of their Poor Law expenditure. We cannot think that large grants of money given thus unconditionally in aid of local expenditure can be conducive to maintaining good administration and a sense of responsibility on the part of the Local Authorities.

DISTRESS DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT.

The report devotes to the subject of the able-bodied and unemployment over 150 pages, many of which deal with the development of social and industrial influences on the problems of distress. There are, in fact, a series of weighty economic essays on the chief causes of unemployment, which are too long to reproduce, and yet difficult to illustrate by extracts. A brief summary and paraphrase may, however, be attempted.

The bright side of the picture is that wealth, wages, and trade have increased, while the cost of living has diminished and the conditions of the workshop have improved. The dark side of the picture is that the stress of machinery and of competition on the one hand demands a higher

skill than our system of education produces, and on the other hand rejects or ejects the workmen with increasing frequency and at an increasingly early age.

In modern industry the middle-aged are senile, and the senile are not employed. Skilled men in their prime are at a premium, but many of our boys reach their prime unskilled, and others, degenerates, never reach any prime at all. There results a steady flow of the young and middle-aged into the morass of casual labour, which, like any physical morass, is both retentive and defiling. Once absorbed in it, a man can with difficulty, if it all, move out of it, or move at all, and whether he struggles or whether he throws up his hands, the tendency is to sink lower.

Moreover, so long as there exists this huge army of labourers who are never regularly employed, every attempt to provide for the comparatively few skilled workmen displaced by machinery or other causes is doomed to failure. The practically inexhaustible flood of casual labourers flows in and swamps the register and the relief works; and apparently these stagnant pools of casual labour are getting larger and still more casual.

But in addition to the casual labourer there is the problem of the men ousted when fashions or firms fail, or when new machinery is introduced.

Changes in method of production follow one another more rapidly than heretofore, and as specialisation becomes more marked and definite those habituated and trained to the processes that are superseded find it more and more difficult to obtain occupation elsewhere.

Nor is there any adequate machinery to enable a man to find and be moved to fresh employment, even though such be waiting for him in another part of the country.

There is at present a great lack of machinery for assisting the mobility of labour, and this at a time when such machinery is particularly needed, and when, through the increase of travelling, postal, telephonic, and telegraph facilities, physical mobility should not be a difficult matter.

An even more serious feature in the present situation is the extraordinary lack of information as to the extent and character of unemployment.

It is at best a happy chance to find a remedy for a disease as to which there is no possibility of accurate diagnosis. But this is the position which we, as a great industrial country, occupy as regards the unemployment of our people. There are no *data* which give any accurate idea of who, and how many, the unemployed are, and what is the duration of their unemployment. Yet the ascertainment of these particulars is essential to the successful treatment of distress from unemployment.

The Commission conclude their survey of social and industrial developments with the following passages:—

The problem which we have now to deal with is far more complicated than that of 1834. Whilst the moral causes contributing to pauperism and unemployment remain much the same as before, the material influences regulating employment and industry have changed both in their character and scope. Forces have come into operation affecting employment, its regularity, its cessation and expansion, which are quite beyond local control. There are modifications and developments in our industrial system which cannot be ignored; and their products and wreckage when either out of employment or in distress require a treatment more elastic and varied than the simple method which 80 years ago was sufficient to cope with able-bodied pauperism in agricultural districts.

THE POOR LAW AND THE ABLE-BODIED.

In brief, as we have seen, our modern difficulties are—(1) the casual and inefficient labourer, (2) the good workman displaced by causes beyond his control, (3) the lack of sufficient information to permit the differentiation between these two classes, and (4) the lack of mobility of labour. How, the report asks, do existing systems of relief to the able-bodied meet these difficulties? Turning to the Poor Law, the workhouse and the labour-yard encourage and even produce the inefficient and “in-and-out,” while

they deter or degrade the efficient workmen. Speaking of the "in-and-outs," the embodiment of the inefficients, the Commission say :—

It is not too much to say that this class has been created by our administration of the Poor Law, while the law itself affords no means of checking it. . . . The mode in which we manufacture this class is graphically described by the master of the Bethnal Green Workhouse :—

"This class of man is well known to the master of every London workhouse as the able-bodied loafer. As a rule, he is a strong, healthy fellow, knowing no trade, evincing great dislike to work, and possessing all the attributes of the soft-shelled crab, willing to live upon the fruits of the labour of the worker, so long as he can avoid the sharing of responsibility himself.

"There is no doubt that the moment this class of man becomes an inmate, so surely does he deteriorate into a worse character still. Unless rigorously dealt with and made to work under strict supervision, he has a fairly good time in the house, and after a month or so he has mastered every trick of the trade, and becomes a confirmed 'in-and-outer,' taking his day's pleasure by merely giving the necessary notice, returning the same evening more contented than ever with his lot in the house. Something for nothing is degrading the man, until all the manhood has left him and there remains for the ratepayers to keep an idle, dissolute remnant."

As to the effect of the workhouse on the efficient man, the Commission say :—

In the main we believe that we have not exaggerated those features in the present workhouse system which make it not only repellent (as is perhaps necessary), but also (as is unnecessary) degrading to the honest man who is anxious to reinstate himself in independence. The workhouse does not afford any abiding help to the class of distressed unemployed who are willing and anxious to work.

As to the labour-yard, it

tends to become the habitual resort of the incapables who are content with the barest subsistence, and are willing to put up with all the inconveniences of the yard so long as they are assured of living at home with enough to keep themselves and their families from starving. After the manner of the parish labourers of 1832, they prefer to do a little work for a certain subsistence out of the rates rather than take any trouble to obtain an independence by their own exertions. The labour-yard, unless well administered, encourages the incapables without reforming them. It provides no incentive to industry; the relief is not earned in proportion to effort, but it is even given in proportion to need, subject to the qualification of performing a prescribed task of work. A loafer with many children may do the *minimum* of work required and obtain four times as much as the industrious single man, even though the latter should do four times the work of the loafer. The labour-yard, in fact, is the home of the "ca'canny," and so infectious is its atmosphere and its principle of "do little" that a stay there will demoralise even the best workmen. Hence, by the industrious and respectable persons out of work the labour-yard has become, and under existing conditions rightly, almost as much tabooed as the workhouse.

But there remains unconditional out-relief, the safety-valve of the Poor Law in times of great and sudden pressure. All safeguards, say the Commission,

can be, and occasionally are, systematically dispensed with on the plea of "sudden and urgent necessity," and under certain dispensatory provisions of the Prohibitory or Regulation Orders. In such cases, out-relief to the able-bodied is given with practically all the freedom which existed before 1832, and in our opinion it is open to all the evils disclosed by the Royal Commission of 1832. Unconditional out-relief to the able-bodied tends to aggravate rather than diminish those accumulations of surplus labour which, as we have seen, are among the disquieting features of modern industrial conditions.

As to the effect of the Poor Law on the mobility of labour,

the whole influence of the present Poor Law upon pauperism is centripetal rather than centrifugal. Except to the extent to which the guardians can emigrate and can remove under the law of settlement, they can only deal with the poor by relieving them where they are. And in proportion as they relieve them where they are, it follows that there is less inducement for the poor to move to other districts. The one method the present Poor Law possesses for directly assisting the mobility of labour within the kingdom is the casual ward; and the whole report of the Vagrancy Committee shows how repellent and useless the administration of the casual ward is to the genuine work searcher.

The conclusion of the Commission is that the present Poor Law in effect does nothing to decrease the mobility of labour or to grapple with the new tendencies which go to make up the modern problems of relief to the distressed able-bodied.

CHARITY AND THE ABLE-BODIED.

The Commission review historically the activities of charity in regard to the relief of the able-bodied. From the time of the great metropolitan distress in 1860 and the Lancashire cotton-famine in 1861-3 down to the more recent years of Mansion House and Press funds for the unemployed, the motive for the interposition of charity in the relief of the able-bodied has been the assumption that the Poor Law is inadequate to meet the situation. Further, the history of these efforts proves it to be inevitable that

a considerable part of all temporary funds for the unemployed shall be wasted on unworthy objects, or, at best, spent with no permanent benefit to the recipients, unless the management of the fund has the assistance of :

- (1) Persons skilled generally in the administration of charity ; and
- (2) Some permanent organisation to which the cases can be referred for treatment.

Where money without work has been freely given the result has been demoralising, and when charity has fallen back on the expedient of "employment relief" the results have been often little less disastrous. The leading idea of Press funds and even of Mansion House funds has often been to attempt to remedy the evils of casual labour by giving more casual labour in the shape of small doles of work. Even when, as in the Mansion House Fund of 1893-4, a serious attempt has been made to select the men, to give them continuous work during the winter, and to restore them to independence afterwards, yet

subsequent inquiries show that only 26 per cent. of the men helped had obtained more or less regular employment, the remaining 74 per cent. having lapsed into casual labour or obtained no employment at all.

Moreover, unemployed funds and works (like the Poor Law) have been centrifoccal rather than centrifugal in their effect on employment, and as the Mansion House Committee of 1887-8 pointed out, they "tend to attract labour to London and further glut the market."

Passing from temporary to permanent charitable institutions, credit is given to the good work of the charity organisation societies, but they are in places unpopular, and their influence is limited, and the Commission conclude that

they would only achieve success if they are multiplied and reorganised as part of a completer and larger organisation, under a new name and upon a wider basis than at present.

The Salvation Army, and especially the Church Army, can, it is recognised, reclaim almost hopeless cases, and the following sphere is allotted to this class of institutions :—

They afford a means of helping otherwise hopeless cases by individual attention, directed and applied with religious enthusiasm. It would appear essential, however, that the numbers dealt with at any one place and time should not be so great as to render individual attention impossible. We think it also inexpedient that such organisations should enter to any large extent into competition with independent industries, and it is obvious that they can deal only with persons willing to submit to voluntary discipline.

Subject to these qualifications, we believe that these permanent charitable organisations have a special aptitude for dealing with the lower grades of the unemployed ; and we think that such organisations might well be used by public relief authorities for dealing with such cases.

The conclusions of the Commission as to charity in connection with the able-bodied are as follows :—

We have found that the intervention of sporadic and unorganised charity in times of special distress from want of employment has done little good and much harm, unless there has been available for the right distribution of the money such experience in the administration of charity as is usually to be found only in a permanent organisation. Sympathy must be linked with discrimination, if charity is not to demoralise, and discrimination is a plant of slow growth. We have also found that much of what may be called the excesses of charity are due to public distrust of the Poor Law, and we may infer that, if the excesses of charity are to be curbed, Poor Law methods must be broadened and reformed so as to regain the general confidence of the public. Beginning at the top of the scale, we have seen that the better class unemployed workman can be afforded effective temporary help by means of permanent charity committees, but that these committees need to be authoritatively recognised if they are to form a definite part of the system for dealing with distress from unemployment. Descending to the bottom of the scale, we have seen that the unemployables in special classes can be successfully dealt with in small numbers by charitable institutions. It would, therefore, appear that the proper field for voluntary effort is that form of distress which is due to temporary unemployment, whilst at the same time it can reclaim some of those whose unemployment is due to moral causes. The spheres of work of organised charity are wide and manifold; but the relief of permanent destitution or of chronic unemployment seems to be more properly the duty of a public authority supported by public funds.

MUNICIPAL RELIEF WORKS.

The Commission next turn to municipal relief works, which are subjected to scathing criticism. These works, as recommended by Mr. Chamberlain when President of the Local Government Board in 1886, were intended for the better class of workmen, whom, in the words of the circular of that date, "it was not desirable to familiarise with Poor Law relief." But no effective measures were taken by the municipalities, as a whole, to ensure that they should confine their relief of the unemployed to the particular class of workmen suggested by the Local Government Board. Moreover, the method of giving doles of work proved particularly attractive to casual labourers.

The municipalities (said Mr. Walter Long), since they could not possibly find work for all the unemployed . . . adopted a most unfortunate shift. They gave the men so much work apiece—i.e., if they had 1,000 men and only enough work for 200, instead of carefully sifting the 1,000 and selecting the 200 most likely to be helped by relief work, they gave all the 1,000 one day's work each, so that you had 200 employed on the Monday, 200 others on the Tuesday, and so on. Thus the good men suffered and the loafers benefited, getting their one or two days' work a week, and loafing the rest of the time.

The Commission rightly points out that—

Such a system is, in fact, nothing but municipal casual labour, offering additional points in favour of that gamble for a weekly existence which is the vice and the attraction of the casual's life.

Moreover, the municipal relief works appear to have been little less demoralising to the efficient workmen than is the labour-yard or the workhouse.

Another defect of relief works to which frequent reference has been made in the evidence submitted to us is its demoralising effect on the industrial capacity of the men employed. We have seen how demoralising in this sense is the test work supplied in workhouses and labour-yards as a condition of relief, and we think it may generally be said of municipal relief work that, in proportion as emphasis is laid on its relief character and not on its commercial character, so the work degenerates from helpful, manly exertion for wages into the inefficient and lazy performance of the necessary prelude to a meal.

The conclusion of the Commission is that—

Municipal relief works have not assisted but rather prejudiced the better class of workmen they were intended to help. On the other hand, they have encouraged the casual labourers, by giving them a further supply of that casual work which is so

dear to their hearts and so demoralising to their character. They have encouraged and not helped the incapables ; they have discouraged and not helped the capables. Moreover, the provision of artificial work for unskilled labourers in particular localities can only tend to fix in such localities these agglomerations of unskilled labour, to disperse which is one of the solutions of local unemployment. We regret, therefore, that we must pronounce the system of relief works suggested by the Local Government Board circular of 1886 a failure, and we support our condemnation of them by the following extract from the report of our special investigators :

The municipal relief works, encouraged by Mr. Chamberlain's circular in 1886, have been in operation for 20 years, and must, we think, be pronounced a complete failure—a failure accentuated by the attempt to organise them by the Unemployed Workmen's Act of 1905. The evidence we have collected seems conclusive that relief works are economically useless. Either ordinary work is undertaken, in which case it is merely forestalled, and, later, throws out of employment the men who are in the more or less regular employ of the councils, or else it is a work which we believe to be even more deteriorating than direct relief. If the "right to work" is to be construed as the right to easy work, we are directly encouraging the lazy and incompetent and discouraging the trade unionist and the thrifty. The evidence seems very strong that most men on relief works do not do their best, and to pay them less than ordinary wages only encourages the belief that they are not expected to do so. Confidence to do the work required should be the basis for selection of men for work, not destitution and a large family. These are very good reasons for giving relief, but not for giving work.

THE UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN ACT.

The Commission next review the operations of the Unemployed Workmen Act. It is pointed out that the general intention of the Act was as follows:—

It aimed at combining members of municipal, Poor Law, and charitable bodies into a new and special local authority, whose normal duty was to watch, so to speak, for the approach of unemployment in their district, and whose abnormal duty was to provide help for the better class of unemployed workmen under conditions which, it was hoped, would avoid some of the evils which had arisen through the unregulated provision of work by the municipalities and charitable agencies.

In so far as the Act provided for the diagnosis of the problem of unemployment and for the classification and dispersal of the unemployed, it would seem, *a priori*, to have met a need which has been indicated by our examination of the modern problem of unemployment in previous sections. In so far, however, as the Act perpetuated the system of relief works, in so far as it assumed that the chief problem of unemployment was furnished by the capable workmen as distinct from the incapable, and in so far as it added yet another authority to the medley of organisations already dealing with the unemployed, the Act seems to have been doomed from the outset to failure administratively and to failure as a remedy for the evils against which it was designed.

There were, however, three specific objects which the promoters of the Act had in view, and each one of these objects has been shown by the evidence not to have been attained.

"We proposed," said Mr. Gerald Balfour, "to deal with the *élite* of the unemployed," and it seems clear from other evidence that it was intended that the Act should benefit regular workmen, of good character, temporarily out of work.

The evidence, however, seems overwhelming that the bulk of the applicants to distress committees have been persons of the class to which the casual labourer belongs.

According to the latest return of the Local Government Board, out of a total of 54,600 applicants pronounced qualified under the Act by distress committees, 29,100, or 53 per cent. were "casual or general labourers," and 10,500, or 19 per cent., belonged to the building trades, and these two categories of cases together formed 72 per cent. of the number of cases entertained.

We find

that the irregular and under-employed labourer, who was intended by the promoters of the Act to be excluded, has in fact very largely, though not exclusively, benefited under the Act ; while, on the other hand, there is a considerable body of evidence to show that, partly on account of this extensive use of the Act by the casual labourers, the better class of workmen, for whom it was intended, have in some districts refused to apply for its benefits.

A second object of the Act was to correct some of the evils of the municipal relief works, but

we regret to be obliged to report that notwithstanding the terms and safeguards of the new Act, we have received evidence that every one of these evils has to a greater or lesser extent been perpetuated by the new authorities.

Municipal relief works persisted by the side of distress committee works, and even prejudicially competed with them.

Considerably more work has been provided by the municipalities than has been provided by the new authorities set up under the Act. The Act has, in fact, systematised municipal relief work without materially altering its unimproving and demoralising character. Except in London the system of dole-work continues to be resorted to.

In the most recent return as to the working of the Act, frequent cases are noted in which, in the same district, work has been provided simultaneously by the municipality and the distress committee. The co-existence of what are in a sense competitive relief works cannot, we think, be beneficial. Our investigators have described how, in such cases in London, the municipal works would employ men rejected by the distress committees, and how men would refuse the distress committee relief work for the easier relief work of the municipality. The reverse of this situation is illustrated at Bournemouth, where the distress committee complain of the straits to which they have been reduced owing to the municipality retaining for their own relief works all the men whose labour was remunerative, and referring to the distress committee relief works all the inefficient. We cannot but think that the simultaneous establishment of independent relief works by two separate authorities in the same district must be productive of harm and tend to destroy any possibility of usefulness in either set of relief works.

A third object of the Act was the prevention of the demoralisation of the "unemployed" by indiscriminate charity. The new bodies were to be a medium for the proper expenditure of charitable subscriptions, and no doubt the Act has to some extent discountenanced the raising of separate "unemployed" funds. But

unfortunately the success of the new bodies in attracting the help of charity has become less and less. Under Mr. Long's scheme, and largely through his instrumentality, £52,000 was collected. In the following year, the first of the new Act, the subscriptions amounted to £105,000. For the next year, in order to meet the plea that voluntary subscriptions were insufficient, the Government allowed the provision of work to be paid for out of Imperial, instead of voluntary funds, and obtained a Parliamentary grant of £200,000 for this purpose; and in this year the voluntary subscriptions sank to £36,000. In the third, the last year of which we have particulars, a similar grant was voted, and the voluntary subscriptions amounted to only £7,800—*i.e.*, less than 1-14th of the amount raised in the first year. Charitable contributions have practically ceased, and a further object-lesson has been afforded of the truth that the charitable public will not easily or largely contribute towards purposes for which money is compulsorily taken from them by means of rates and taxes.

The Act, therefore, is held to have failed in regard to its three main objects, though it is recognised that it has been of service in some directions.

A number of decent, sober, honest workmen who would have felt naturally reluctant to go to the Poor Law were assisted during a period of serious unemployment. It was a good thing to bring together in one body members of diverse agencies, hitherto working spasmodically and disconnectedly towards the same object—the relief of the able-bodied. The association of guardians, town councillors, and voluntary workers on the distress committees has been of great benefit educationally. The new bodies, and the public from whom they are recruited, are beginning to diagnose the problem of unemployment, and to recognise its diversity and difficulty, as they have never done before. Since 1905 the nation as a whole has learned much about the possibilities and the limitations of help for the unemployed. But if it is true that valuable educational experience is due to the Act, it is also true that it is the failures rather than the successes of the Act which have provided the education.

In various directions the local authorities set up by the Act have accomplished work of great value with regard to emigration, labour colonies, and labour exchanges.

What, however, we do emphatically assert is that neither distress committees nor unemployed bodies are necessary for carrying out these methods of assisting the distressed able-bodied. On the other hand, the unsuccessful methods of the distress committees are in our opinion so harmful that we feel it to be in the interests of the State that they should be discontinued. Except as regards the operations referred to above, we believe that the Act has mainly resulted in the wholesale and periodic relief of casual or chronically under-employed labourers under non-deterrent conditions. This class of men is tending to rely more and more on the regular provision of municipal relief work which has been sanctioned and encouraged under the Act. In effect the result is, that we are in some danger of repeating in an indirect manner the disastrous experiment of relief to able-bodied wage earners, which occasioned the scandals and reforms of 1834. The gravamen of the Report of 1832 is that the community was subsidising wages which ought properly to be paid by the employers. But if casual labourers are supported year after year at certain seasons at the cost of the rates, their yearly wage is just as effectively subsidised by the community in 1905, as their weekly wage was subsidised by the community in 1832. . . . We feel, therefore, that if the working classes are to retain their independence and their industrial efficiency it is essential that all encouragement of casual labour out of public funds or the subsidisation of the wages of casual labour should cease as soon as possible.

For this and for the other reasons we have detailed, we recommend that the Unemployed Workmen Act should not be continued, and that the functions of distress committees, so far as they are useful, should in future be discharged in the manner hereafter described.

PROPOSED REMEDIES.

As some of the main causes of unemployment are shown to be social and industrial, so some of the main remedies proposed by the Commission are preventive measures of a social and industrial character. And, because they are preventive, they are not so much measures designed for the distressed unemployed as measures designed for the community at large with a view to preventing persons from becoming distressed unemployed.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE YOUNG.

At the head of the list of preventive measures stand some weighty suggestions in connection with education. The Commissioners appointed a Special Investigator to conduct an inquiry into the subject of boy labour. Both the Investigator and the Commission emphasise the evils of the large employment of boys in "uneducative and blind-alley occupations," which offer comparatively high wages to boys leaving school, but lead nowhere, offer no prospect of occupation to the boys as men, and no opportunity of training for other occupations. Boys employed, for example, as messengers are only too apt to degenerate, and when they reach manhood and are forced to come out of their "blind-alley occupation" they drift into the ranks of the casual and inefficient labourers. With a view to meeting these evils the Commission

Regard with favour the suggestions that boys should be kept at school until the age of 15 instead of 14; that exemption below this age should be granted only for boys leaving to learn a skilled trade; and that there should be school supervision till 16 and replacing in school of boys not properly employed.

Further

There is urgent need of improved facilities for technical education after the present age for leaving school. With a view to the improvement of physique, a continuous system of physical drill should be instituted which might be commenced during school life, and be continued afterwards; and, in order to discourage boys from entering uneducative occupations which offer no prospect of permanent employment, there should be established, in connection with the labour exchange, a special organisation

for giving boys, parents, teachers, and school managers information and guidance as to suitable occupations for children leaving school.

The general system of elementary education does not escape severe criticism.

A considerable amount of evidence has been submitted to us to the effect that the present system of elementary education is not adapted to the wants of an industrial community. There is a consensus of feeling, in which we ourselves concur, that the present education is too literary and diffuse in its character, and should be more practical. It should be more combined than at present with manual training. It is not in the interests of the country to produce by our system of education a dislike of manual work and a taste for clerical and for intermittent work, when the vast majority of those so educated must maintain themselves by manual labour. If school training is to be an adaptation of the child to its future life and occupation, some revision of the present curriculum of public elementary schools seems necessary.

LABOUR EXCHANGES.

The establishment of labour exchanges occupies a foremost place amongst the permanent industrial proposals. A national system established and maintained by the Board of Trade is proposed so as to promote the mobility of labour and also provide, for the first time, accurate data and records of the amount, character, and intensity of industrial depression on unemployment. The failures and successes of the pioneer exchanges in England and in Germany are reviewed. In Germany "there is a network of labour exchanges of various types." The most important and the most akin to what we should propose for England are the public and municipal exchanges.

There are over 200 such among the 700 odd exchanges, filling now 50,000 places a month, which report regularly to the Imperial Statistical Officer. Practically there is a public general exchange in every town of over 50,000 inhabitants, and in a very large proportion of the smaller towns. Most of the public labour exchanges date from 1894-6 or received a fresh impulse then. They have been extraordinarily successful. We see no reason why the features which have been so successful in Germany should not be reproduced to a large extent in England.

The exiguous success of the English labour exchanges is found to be due to three chief causes. In early days their

Over-close association with the faults and failings of particular local authorities led to the labour bureaux becoming the "shuttlecock" of party politics, and to a large extent mere registers whence a borough surveyor could get his staff of scavengers.

More latterly the association of the exchanges with a relief authority assisting the lower types of labour has repelled the best workmen and also many employers. Lastly, there has been the local financial difficulty. In districts where unemployment is worst expenditure should be greatest, but any increase in the local rates tends to increase the local unemployment. Hence, the exchanges have not always been adequately supported.

These defects are due almost entirely to the local management of exchanges, and they point to the need of a national system. The same conclusion is indicated by the following argument :—

The greatest objection to be urged against the existing system is that, under it, labour exchanges are only set up sporadically. Isolated exchanges, especially if successful in their detachment, tend to decrease rather than increase the general mobility of labour. If, for instance, labour exchanges are established in London, and not at Norwich, the fact that these facilities for quickly obtaining work are available in London is all the more likely to attract to London, or to retain in London, unemployed people who think that they have thereby a better chance of getting work.

A NATIONAL SYSTEM ADVOCATED.

With a view to avoiding the defects of the English system and securing the success of the German system the following recommendations are made :—

A national system of labour exchanges should be established and worked by the

Board of Trade for the general purposes of assisting the mobility of labour, and of collecting accurate information as to unemployment. The labour exchanges should be in charge of officers of the Board of Trade, assisted by committees of employers, workmen, and representatives of local authorities. There should be no compulsion to use the labour exchanges, but the object of the Government and the local authorities should be to encourage and popularise them in every way—*e.g.*, by propaganda and by making use of the exchanges in engaging workmen. The labour exchanges should be granted free postal and telephone facilities by the State. Arrangements should be made to enable the labour exchanges to grant passes entitling workmen travelling to a situation to specially cheap railway fares; in suitable cases the cost of the passes might be defrayed by the labour exchange and recovered afterwards from the workmen.

The expected advantages are many :—

If a national system of labour exchanges, working automatically all over the country, could be established, it should tend to ensure that the supply of labour available in all parts of the country would be, in a measure, gauged and recorded. It might be hoped that demand and supply would be brought generally and locally in touch with each other, and that the overstocking of certain trades and the difficulty of getting labour in other industries would be diminished. The present system of engaging work-people, whether through advertisement or by taking them on at the gate, is often wasteful and ineffective. By using the exchange as a centre, the employer would obtain the men he wanted, and the men would know where they were wanted, instead of having to endure, as at present, the misery of tramping for problematical work. To this extent the exchanges would replace haphazard methods by a comprehensive system based on industrial supply and demand. The need for labour in country districts could possibly be met by placing out men from the towns who had an aptitude for agricultural work. And, in another way, the labour exchanges might help to check rural depopulation by diffusing accurate information as to the actual conditions of life in large towns. It is hoped that labour exchanges would also

- (1) Make it easier for men permanently displaced by industrial changes to pass to a new occupation.
- (2) Facilitate the use of subsidiary by seasonal workers.
- (3) Substitute for artificial tests and inquiries the beneficial and natural test of a situation through the exchange.

CASUAL LABOUR AND THE REGULARISATION OF EMPLOYMENT.

On this important subject the Commission recommend succinctly that

Government departments and local and public authorities should be enjoined to regularise their work as far as possible, and to endeavour, as far as possible, to undertake their irregular work when the general demand for labour is slack.

The meaning of this somewhat difficult recommendation is expanded in the following passage :—

Dealing first with the proposal to spread work more evenly over the year, it is obviously desirable that, in so far as it can be foreseen that a certain amount of work will regularly need to be performed each year, that work should, in the interests of the men and of the employers, be done by regular and not by casual employees. From the evidence which has been accumulated by our Special Investigators, Messrs. Jackson and Pringle, it is clear that the local authorities, and also some of the Government departments, have not always given due weight to this principle.

Turning now to the second proposal for the regularisation of work—*viz.*, the reservation by local authorities and public bodies of certain work which it is proposed should be put upon the open market in slack times, this proposal must be scrutinised with some care. To the extent to which it suggests that public authorities should not regularise their work, but should deliberately casualise it for the benefit of the intermittent labourer, we think that the proposal is pernicious. It is probable, however, that it may not always be possible for public authorities to perform their work entirely and regularly throughout the year by means of their ordinary workmen. In addition to the normal work of such authorities there will generally be some special work, in some years more, in some years less in amount, the undertaking of which is imposed upon them by their necessities. So far as it may be inevitable to employ occasionally other than their own regular workers, or to place contracts, we think that it may be desirable for public authorities to arrange such irregular work so that, if possible, it comes upon the labour market at a time when ordinary regular work is slack. This point has been well put by Professor Chapman, who suggests that, so far as the public

authorities' demand for labour fluctuates, it is desirable to liberate such demand from the influences of good and bad trade and seasonality, and then deliberately to attempt to make it vary inversely with the demand in the open market. A policy of this kind might help to some extent to steady the fluctuations in the demand for intermittent labour. Such demand cannot, as we have seen, be abolished. The object must, therefore, be so to spread out the total demand for intermittent labour that it shall, as far as possible, provide a regular sufficiency of employment for the residuum of workers engaged in it.

The question of restricting the use of intermittent labour by private employers is thus dealt with :—

With regard to private employers it may doubtless be urged that a large reserve of labour is really essential to them ; that if they have not such large reserve available it will be impossible for them in the face of competition to accept new contracts suddenly advertised ; that such contracts will go elsewhere—possibly abroad—and will carry with them, as is too often the case, other orders. The result would be that the general volume of trade undertaken by them would decrease. We recognise, further, to the full, the difficulty there may be in certain occupations, such, particularly, as the docks, both on the part of the men and on the part of the employers, in inducing them to regularise industry. We think, therefore, that the Board of Trade should send officers to visit localities where intermittent employment prevails, and should endeavour, through conference with employers and employed, to arrange for some schemes by which the industry may be to a greater extent regularised. A provision in this sense has, we understand, been inserted in the Port of London Act for establishing a London Port Authority.

INSURANCE AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT.

In an interesting section on this subject, the Commission show that practically the only attempt in England at insurance against unemployment is represented by the practice of certain trades unions to grant "unemployed benefit." Abroad the experimental methods of insurance roughly fall into two classes :—

(1) Methods which involve separate schemes of insurance with separate funds and separate organisations for separate trade groups.

(2) Methods for the insurance in one fund of all classes of workmen as workmen and not as members of particular trade groups.

The latter class of methods is called "General Insurance," the former "Trade-group Insurance." By "trade-group" is meant "any association of persons engaged in the same occupation or in kindred occupations, liable, approximately, to the same risk of unemployment."

The great difficulty in regard to any scheme of general insurance against unemployment is the tendency of any such scheme to result in the accumulation of "bad risks." In commercial insurance against death or sickness the "bad risks" are eliminated by medical examination, or, if not eliminated, are forced to pay a higher premium. But in insurance against unemployment, it is precisely the "bad risks"—i.e., those most subject to unemployment—who most need and press for insurance. As a rule, in general schemes the premiums are based on wages, and the bad risks, being less well paid, pay less, not greater, premiums than the regular highly paid workman. The good workmen, who obtain regular employment at good wages and are rarely out of work, do not care to pay premiums which are practically all absorbed by the irregular or bad workmen who are constantly out of work. The consequence is that, where such schemes are compulsory, as at St. Gall, there is practically a revolt amongst the better class of workmen, and where they are voluntary, the better-class workmen either do not join, or else, as at Basel, abandon the fund, which then becomes merely a species of savings bank for less competent workmen largely subsidised by charity.

On the other hand, the advantages of trade-group insurance are that the risks within each trade are, even if inaccurately, yet voluntarily estimated and borne by that trade, and the premium can be adjusted according to each trade's estimate of the risk. There is a sense of solidarity amongst the men within a trade which permits them to be content to pay for the support of the less fortunate members of that trade. And though all insurance rests on the principle of the fortunate paying for the unfortunate, yet as the Board of Trade has pointed out, the principle of solidarity clearly cannot be carried successfully beyond the point up to which it is supported by the sentiment of solidarity. Another advantage of trade-group insurance is that all the men in the trade-group are more or less known to one another, and the chance of fraudulent unemployment or malingering is reduced to a *minimum*. It is in the interest of each workman to see that a fellow-workman does not draw unemployed benefit when work is available for him. The available work is, as a rule, well known within a trade union by means of its organisation, with the consequence that a supervision can thus be ensured which, in the case of a general insurance fund, would be almost impossible, or, if not impossible, would involve an expenditure on the supervising staff which would largely add to the cost of the scheme.

The Commission weigh the merits and demerits of a voluntary and a compulsory scheme, and the balance of argument is against a universal compulsory system.

The disadvantage of a compulsory scheme is that, in the existing unorganised state of a large part of the labour market, such a compulsory scheme must either work on a "general" rather than a "trade-group" basis, or else must, as a condition precedent to its success, force all the labourers into trade-group organisations. At the present time it is estimated, even by the trade unionists themselves, that not more than a quarter of the working classes in England are organised in trade unions; while Sir Edward Brabrook estimates that the trade unionists are only one-sixth of the total number of workmen. It therefore follows that a compulsory universal scheme, if founded on a trade-group basis, would require compulsion to be applied to at least three-quarters of the working-classes to form or join trade organisations; and, if not founded on a trade-group basis, it would lack solidarity in its premiums, risks, and payments. A compulsory universal scheme not on a trade-group basis would, therefore, involve the State in the difficulties of fixing, enforcing, and collecting the premiums, and in the invidious and costly task of detecting malingering. These features would add enormously to the difficulty and expense of administering a compulsory as compared with a voluntary scheme. Further, a universal compulsory scheme would necessarily be opposed by the existing trades and benefit organisations, especially if it were enforced by means of deductions from the workmen's wages. It would interfere and compete with such voluntary organisations, and upon the basis of compulsion such competition would probably be successful. For this and other reasons it has been found that, in most instances, the working classes either oppose such a compulsory general scheme, or where, as at St. Gall, they have first proposed it, on ascertaining its results they have been the first to insist on its abolition.

SUBSIDIES TO PROVIDENT ORGANISATIONS.

Finally, the report suggests the desirability of some scheme on the principle of making an addition or subsidy from public funds to every payment of unemployed benefit made by a trade organisation to one of its members. The subsidy would not only be paid to existing trade unions, but also to special trade organisations which it is hoped would spring into existence for purely insurance purposes.

If, however, the subsidy were to be offered to any provident organisation which would make unemployment insurance a leading feature of its business, we should look for the advent of a new type of friendly society, composed of men of similar or allied trades, who would have the necessary trade solidarity and knowledge of each other's circumstances, and whose interests would be sufficiently similar to prevent

the "bad risks" crowding out the good. It would, in fact, be a trade union organised for provident benefits alone. If such societies came into existence under the encouragement of a subsidy we might hope for insurance against unemployment becoming general over the field of labour. Such a result, we venture to say, would far more than counterbalance the expense of the subsidy.

An analogous system is known abroad as the Ghent system, and the report discusses at some length and with considerable favour the possibility and advantages of introducing the principles of this system into England. In view, however, of the weighty objections which can be raised to any scheme of unemployment insurance and of the absence on the Commission of any actuarial experts, the actual conclusions of the Commission are only as follows:—

The establishment and promotion of unemployment insurance, especially amongst unskilled and unorganised labour, is of paramount importance in averting distress arising from unemployment. The attainment of this object is of such national importance as to justify under specified conditions contributions from public funds towards its furtherance. This form of insurance can best be promoted by utilising the agency of existing trade organisations, or of organisations of a similar character, which may be brought into existence by a hope of participation in the public contributions. No scheme of unemployment insurance, either foreign or British, which has been brought before us, is so free from objections as to justify us in specifically recommending it for general adoption. A small commission or inter-departmental committee of experts and representatives of existing trade benefit organisations should be at once appointed with an instruction to frame as quickly as possible a scheme or schemes for consideration. After that committee has reported, a special advisory board should be set up to help and promote schemes adapted to the varying conditions of different industrial communities.

THE PERMANENT SYSTEM OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FOR THE ABLE-BODIED.

The main features of the Commission's scheme are shown in the following recommendations, which we give in full:—

(1) There shall be in every district four separate but closely co-operating organisations with the common object of maintaining or restoring the workman's independence, viz.:—

- (a) An organisation for insurance against unemployment, to develop and secure (with contributions from public funds) the greatest possible benefits to the workmen from co-operative insurance against unemployment.
- (b) A labour exchange established and maintained by the Board of Trade to provide efficient machinery for putting those requiring work and those requiring workers into prompt communication.
- (c) A voluntary aid committee to give advice and aid out of voluntary funds, especially to the better class of workmen reduced to want through unemployment.
- (d) A Public Assistance Authority representing the county or county borough and acting locally through a Public Assistance Committee to assist necessitous workmen under specified conditions at the public expense.

(2) It shall be a fundamental principle of the system of Public Assistance that the responsibility for the due and effective assistance of all necessitous persons at the public expense shall be in the hands of one, and only one, authority in each county and county borough—viz., the Public Assistance Authority, a statutory committee of the county or county borough council.

(3) The guiding principles of the organisations engaged in the work of Public Assistance should be:—(a) Co-operation, so as to secure prompt and efficacious treatment of appropriate cases by the various agencies. (b) Discrimination, so as to select treatment appropriate for each case and yet encourage general thrift and independence. (c) Restoration, so as to prepare workmen by restorative treatment for return to independent life.

(4) From the point of view of treatment, the necessitous unemployed may be divided into three classes.

Class I.—Those requiring temporary maintenance and work.

Class II.—Those requiring for a longer period maintenance and work with training.

Class III.—Those requiring detention and discipline.

(5) For Class I. and Class II. there will be available various methods of treatment under the Public Assistance Authority (622, 626, 627), but Class III. will be handed over to another authority—the Home Office—and dealt with in detention colonies.

It is impossible to detail the various methods of treatment of the able-bodied which are proposed, but the key-note is given in the last of the above recommendations, for, as the Commission say elsewhere, “at the root of the new system lies the principle of classification.”

IMPORTANCE OF CLASSIFICATION.

The object of classification is to secure separate and appropriate treatment for the better as well as for the worse class of the able-bodied. The new departure in the scheme, and, indeed, in a sense its basis, is the segregation of the loafer for the purpose of compulsory disciplinary treatment.

We have accordingly recommended that persons should be committed to a “detention colony” under the Home Office, for any period between six months and three years, who have been guilty of wilful and persistent repetition within a given period of any of the following offences:—

- (1) Wilful refusal or neglect of persons to maintain themselves or their families (although such persons are wholly or in part able to do so), the result of such refusal or neglect being that the persons or their families have become chargeable to the Public Assistance Authority.
- (2) Wilful refusal on the part of a person receiving assistance to perform the work or to observe the regulations duly prescribed in regard to such assistance.
- (3) Wilful refusal to comply with the conditions laid down by the Public Assistance Authority upon which assistance can be obtained, with the result that a person's family thereby becomes chargeable.
- (4) Giving way to gambling, drink, or idleness, with the result that a person or his or her family thereby becomes chargeable.

The results of this provision will be, we hope, that the loafer, the “in-and-out,” the person who neglects his family, or who makes them chargeable owing to habits of gambling, drink, or idleness, &c., &c., will be submitted to a course of severe discipline and training, which, even if it does not restore the man to a comparative state of industrial efficiency, will, at the least, for a certain period prevent him from further demoralisation, and will to some extent deter both himself and others from indulging in the vice or habit responsible for his downfall.

METHODS OF ASSISTANCE.

The loafer being thus taken off the hands of the Public Assistance Authorities, those bodies will be in a better position to apply a graded scheme of restorative treatment to the better classes of workmen. For applicants with decent homes and good industrial record there will be available, for a strictly limited period, out-door relief or, as it is called, home assistance, provided that the requisite assistance is not forthcoming from any other source, that the assistance is given on condition of daily work, that the applicant is registered at the labour exchange, and that his relief should cease as soon as suitable occupation has been offered through the Labour Exchange. It is further laid down that

an essential principle to be observed in connection with home assistance to the able-bodied is that it should be in some way less agreeable than aid given by the Voluntary Aid Committee or than receipt of unemployed benefit through insurance.

Next, there will be available partial home assistance by which “we mean home assistance for the family, the applicant himself being maintained in an institution and given work.” This method in fact perpetuates the principle of what is known as the “modified workhouse-test”; it enables the workman to be taken into an institution without breaking up his home.

Lastly, there will be institutional assistance by which "we mean continuous maintenance in an industrial or agricultural institution or colony without detention, except in so far as the applicant binds himself by a written agreement to stay for a definite period."

INDUSTRIAL OR AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

The best summary of the nature of these institutions is given in recommendations 150-155, which we here reproduce :—

Industrial or agricultural institutions should be situated in the country or on the outskirts of towns, in many cases a disused workhouse might be adapted. They should include housing accommodation for those receiving institutional or partial home assistance. They should be built in an inexpensive manner and with sufficient land to employ a large number of persons. For industrial occupations, inexpensive workshops should be erected. The workshops and land need not necessarily be adjacent to the housing accommodation. The industrial and agricultural institutions will be in direct communication with the labour exchange, and one of the primary objects of their officials should be the restoration to industrial efficiency and independence of the inmates under their care.

LABOUR COLONIES.

In addition to these agricultural and industrial institutions there will be labour colonies, though the Commission's approval of these institutions is somewhat guarded.

In recommending the policy of establishing labour colonies we do so with a full appreciation of their limitations as at present recorded by their work. But the substitution of colonies for the general workhouse means open air or outside treatment for the able-bodied, in place of the present intramural workhouse treatment : it affords opportunities for more varied methods of industrial treatment than are possible in the somewhat confined space of a workhouse. We cannot doubt that healthier influences, both physical and moral, will be associated with these new conditions, and will conduce to the reform or rehabilitation of those sent to the colonies. As regards cost, we do not think that the colonies will be found expensive in comparison with the present system. The expense of maintenance, site, and building should be less than in the case of urban workhouses.

The chief recommendations in connection with labour colonies are :—

The colony system should provide several distinct classes of treatment, either in separate colonies or in distinct divisions of the same colony. Public assistance authorities might combine to establish a colony or colonies for their common use. The colonies of voluntary and religious bodies should be utilised by the public assistance authorities for restorative treatment in suitable cases. The colony system should be carefully controlled and supervised by special additional officers of the Local Government Board.

It will be found that the objects of the labour colony are not clearly differentiated in the report from those of the industrial or agricultural institutions.

Indeed, as the Commission remarked, "A colony is but another name for an institution," and the precise form which the labour colony shall in future take is perhaps wisely left to the development of experience.

So far, however, as any indication is given in the report, it would appear that the industrial and agricultural institution will be the ordinary institution for the use of able-bodied persons in receipt of either Home Assistance, Partial Home Assistance, or Institutional Assistance, whilst the labour colony would be a specialised form of institution for special classes, which would probably be shared and managed by several Public Assistance Authorities. Both in industrial institutions and in colonies a new principle is to be adopted in encouragement of hopefulness and industry.

Under the Poor Law, as now administered, there is no means by which a well-conducted and hard-working man in an institution can, if he performs well his daily task, receive any payment. We would relax this principle in the case of well-conducted men in institutions or colonies, and if a man shows industry during his time of training

he might, we think, receive at the discretion of the superintendent some small gratuity in the shape of good-conduct pay ; the greater part of such sum to accumulate and to be given him when he leaves the colony.

It will be seen that the essence of the new scheme is to substitute, for the present hopeless and often workless workhouse, institutions, with land attached, which will have for their definite purpose training and restoration, and will combine with disciplined work some hope to the inmate of ultimate restoration to independence. With this hope to draw him onwards, and with the fear of the detention colony to keep him from falling backwards, the able-bodied recipient of Public Assistance, who will be kept in touch with an energetic labour exchange, should have a far better prospect of rehabilitation than heretofore.

EMIGRATION.

For suitable applicants for Public Assistance who cannot permanently maintain themselves in this country emigration will be available.

While emigration by itself cannot be considered as a sufficient remedy for unemployment, it is, nevertheless, a valuable means of dealing with a certain class of cases which are likely to make a fresh start under new conditions. More especially is it indispensable in dealing with districts where an excessive congestion of labour has taken place, and where exceptional treatment is called for.

LIMITATION OF DISFRANCHISEMENT.

Finally, there is a recommendation that Public Assistance should not disfranchise its recipient unless the Assistance extends over three months or more in the qualifying year. This proposal should effectually dispose of the argument that even temporary and unavoidable resort to Public Assistance is degrading, and recognised to be so by the State.

SUMMARY OF SCHEME.

Summing up, then, it will be seen that the essence of the new scheme is the transference of the duties of providing for the necessitous able-bodied from boards of guardians and distress committees to county and county borough Public Assistance Authorities. In the hands of these new authorities will be large powers to give assistance to necessitous workmen on varied conditions of work, and the principle is to be that both assistance and work, while strictly under conditions and not always agreeable, are to be shorn of what have been the often degrading associations of the present workhouse. The new treatment is to be stimulative and encouraging to the recipient, but it is at the same time not to be such as to be vicariously discouraging to the workman maintaining himself without resort to public assistance.

The Public Assistance Committee (says the Report) should as far as possible endeavour to select treatment which will restore the individual to independence ; but it should at the same time endeavour in its treatment of individual cases so to establish its policy as to make it one of general encouragement to the thrifty and independent.

A humane scheme of public assistance firmly but humanely administered on these principles by new local authorities starting with a fresh record, should afford no justification for the continuation or the establishment of separate systems of relief, hence the Commission say :—

When all the different parts of our scheme are properly developed, we believe that, in the aggregate, it will be adequate to arrest and deal with the distress due to unemployment. It is upon this assumption that we have insisted that, in the future, there should be, in each area, one, and only one, public authority empowered to grant assistance out of public funds to necessitous individuals. We therefore recommend that the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, should expire as soon as the new system has come into operation.

TRANSITIONAL MEASURES AS TO DISTRESS FROM UNEMPLOYMENT.

Under this heading the following scheme is advocated :—

For a strictly limited period during the earlier years of the reforms which we suggest the following arrangements should be made :—The various existing local authorities should draw up, either singly or in co-operation, and submit to the Local Government Board for approval, schemes of works of public utility which might be put in operation in times of exceptional and protracted distress due to severe industrial depression. If the Local Government Board are satisfied, after consultation with the Board of Trade, that there exists exceptional and protracted distress, to meet which the resources of the voluntary aid committees and public assistance authorities are inadequate, then the local authorities (other than the public assistance authorities) may obtain loans from the Public Works Loan Commissioners at the rate of interest at which the Imperial Government can borrow, so as to enable special works approved to be carried out. The special works should be carried out on ordinary commercial lines, by contract, and the fitness or unfitness of workmen for the work shall be the main consideration in engaging or dismissing them, and in determining the conditions of their employment. All workmen so employed shall, as far as practicable, be taken from the register of the local labour exchange. The wages paid will be the ordinary market wages for the kind of work done, whether piecework or time rates.

In support of this scheme the Commission point out that the permanent system which we propose to set up will take some time before it can become thoroughly effective. This applies not only to the organisation directly dealing with distress, but also to the measures, preventive of distress, which we suggest. But during the earlier stages of their development prolonged distress of an acute kind may occur. If there be no special machinery in reserve, and our proposals, not having had time to develop, should prove inadequate to meet this exceptional distress, the new system of Public Assistance may be overtaxed.

And although any special machinery for dealing with exceptional distress is open to the objection that it tends to shake public confidence in the sufficiency of the permanent system of relief, yet unless during the early years of the new system there is some official organisation ready to meet emergencies, the public will insist in future, as they have done in the past, upon extemporising remedies both dangerous and demoralising, and “they may even force the Government into passing hasty and temporary legislation.” Such a contingency is one to be avoided if possible, for

the evil of extemporised, and in a sense opportunist, methods does not end with their inadequacy nor with the demoralisation which they temporarily produce ; they tend to persist as methods after the emergency which called them into existence has passed away. Nor is this all ; in persisting they sometimes deteriorate and come to be looked upon as permanent methods of assistance parallel with the normal Poor Law or Public Assistance system, and to a certain extent superseding it in a harmful way.

In deciding upon what form the emergency measures should take, the Commission have been influenced by the precedent of the commercial works which were undertaken at the time of the Lancashire cotton famine out of loan money advanced to the local authorities by the State.

In regard to the financial facilities which it is proposed to give for these commercial works the Commission reject the idea of a direct Government grant on the ground among others that “such a grant creates the idea that the Government out of national funds are providing local work for the unemployed.” As an alternative method they again resort to the expedient adopted in 1863 :—

At the time of the Lancashire cotton famine the course was adopted of allowing the local authorities to borrow from the Government at a less rate of interest than they themselves could have obtained in the open market, but the money was not advanced to the local authorities at a lower rate of interest than that at which the Government itself could borrow. What the local authorities enjoyed was the advantage of national over local credit. Since 1863 the practice of local authorities borrowing money through the Public Works Loan Board has been largely extended, though the operations of the Board have recently been curtailed. The Board now refuses to lend

money (except for the purposes of education, small holdings, &c.) to a local authority the rateable value of whose area amounts to £200,000 or upwards, and in the case of other local authorities the Board will only lend for certain purposes—*e.g.*, education, Poor Law, sanitary works, housing, small holdings, &c. We suggest that these limitations upon the powers of the Public Works Loans Board should be cancelled in regard to loans required by local authorities for the purpose of carrying out works for the relief of the labour market such as we suggest. It is a condition of all loans granted by the Board on the security of local rates that the rates of interest, which are fixed by the Treasury, shall be such that no loss is thrown upon the Local Loans Fund, but, without abandoning this principle, we think that it should be within the power of the Board to grant loans for the purposes we have indicated at the rate of interest at which the Imperial Government can borrow.

In brief, then, the scheme is that local authorities shall prepare beforehand, and submit for approval to the Local Government Board, schemes of special works, which may be carried out in a time of exceptional and protracted distress. When the Local Government Board, after consulting the Board of Trade, have officially declared such a time to have supervened, then the local authorities shall have special facilities given them for loans for carrying on these works on commercial lines and not as relief. The report is not very enthusiastic about the scheme, although the following advantages are claimed for it :—

First, such work, if put on the market at a time of special distress, will help to restart the industrial machine at a time when the contagion of discouragement, want of enterprise, and timidity is making it move slowly and with great friction. The work will thus anticipate and tend to induce that general revival of industry which, in the present industrial organism, once started is equally contagious. Secondly, it will relieve the labour market to some extent, while assisting the classes least able to provide for themselves by insurance and trade organisation and, therefore, most liable to deterioration.

Yet there are obvious objections to this as to every scheme for meeting exceptional distress by exceptional measures. And in making their proposal the Commission are fully conscious of its defects.

We make no claim to having discovered a scheme for employing men profitably when private capital and private employers cannot do so. But we may fairly claim to have had every aspect of the difficulty under consideration ; and if we put forward this it is because it seems to involve the least disturbance and to avoid the greater evils in which, experience shows, relief works usually end.

In other words, if the community is ill, the community must pay for it. We cannot make a profit out of our distress. The problem is limited to circumscribing the suffering at the least cost in money and morale.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.

INVALIDITY INSURANCE.

While recognising the desirability of establishing some form of insurance against invalidity, which might be based on a scheme of contributions by the workmen, the employer, and the State, the Commission make no definite recommendations, and merely submit that the information at their disposal requires to be supplemented before legislation can be attempted.

LIMITATION OF DISFRANCHISEMENT.

A person is not to be disfranchised on account of receiving public assistance unless such assistance shall have extended over three months or more in the qualifying year.

RECOVERY OF COST OF RELIEF.

The principle of the recovery of the cost of relief or assistance from liable relatives is to be maintained and uniformly enforced, and non-liable relatives should also be induced to contribute where they are able to do so.

Poor persons are to have the power to proceed directly against liable relatives without the intervention of the Public Assistance Authority; but, on the other hand, the authority is to have the power to proceed against such relatives before the applicant becomes actually chargeable.

POOR LAW OFFICERS.

The tenure of Poor Law officers is to remain as at present, with the exception that the Local Government Board is to lay down more precise qualifications for such officers, and, subject to these qualifications being fulfilled, the entire responsibility for the appointment of the officers is to be left to the new local authorities. The clerk to the new Public Assistance Authority is to be called the Director of Public Assistance, and is to be a whole-time officer. The clerk to the Public Assistance Committee is to combine that office with the work of a Superintendent Relieving Officer (as is done in Scotland in the case of the Inspector of Poor), and is to be called the Superintendent of Public Assistance. A public Assistance Service is to be established, and to include all Poor Law officers. In this "service" there should be more opportunity for promotion, and no question of superannuation should hinder the transfer of officers from one local authority to another. At present, when a Poor Law officer is moved from one union to another union, the union which receives him loses all the contributions which the officer has paid into the union which he is leaving, and the union which receives him is, notwithstanding, liable to pay the full amount of his superannuation allowance. This consideration frequently prejudices an experienced officer, no longer very young, who wishes to obtain a better post in another union. With a view to avoiding this difficulty in future, a Central Superannuation Fund for Poor Law officers is to be established.

INDOOR RELIEF OR INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE.

Instead of being housed, as is often done at present, in one institution, the indoor poor are to be divided into seven classes, viz.:—Children, aged and infirm, able-bodied men, able-bodied women, vagrants, feeble-minded and epileptics. Each class is to be accommodated in separate appropriate institutions, and within every institution for the aged and the able-bodied there is to be classification on the basis of conduct before and after admission. Treatment in institutions is to be in all cases as far as possible curative and restorative, and, with a view to seeing that the treatment is having the desired effect, all indoor cases are to be revised from time to time by a responsible committee.

OUTDOOR RELIEF OR HOME ASSISTANCE.

The chief recommendations under this head are that out-relief or home assistance be given only after thorough inquiry; that it be adequate; and that the persons assisted should be subject to supervision, which supervision should include in its purview the conditions moral and sanitary under which the recipient is living. It should be a condition of out-relief that the recipients are living respectable lives in decent houses; and as a step towards this the public assistance authority should have power to refuse relief in certain areas where the conditions of living are bad. Moreover, there should be systematic co-operation with recognised voluntary aid committees in the care and treatment of cases; and voluntary agencies should be utilised as far as possible for this purpose.

CHILDREN.

The Commission make no specific recommendations for abolishing existing methods of dealing with children except in one instance. The maintenance of children in the workhouse is to be no longer recognised as a legitimate way of dealing with them. On the other hand, the system of boarding-out is to be extended as far as possible, and children boarded out within the union are to be placed under the supervision of local women officers and under the inspection of the Local Government Board. The public assistance authorities are to have power to retain supervision of adopted children up to the age of 21. Such children would become the wards of the local authority, and one of the parents (if found worthy), or some other responsible person, should be associated with the local authority as the official guardian. There is to be closer supervision of the condition of children in receipt of out-relief with a view to ascertaining that they are being properly nourished, clothed, and housed. Unless these conditions are assured, the children should be maintained in an institution or an industrial school. There should be more medical supervision of all children under the Poor Law. It is laid down that mothers of children in receipt of out-relief should not be expected to go out to work unless satisfactory arrangements can be made for the children. The Poor Law children should not be transferred entirely to the care of the education authorities, and the policy and provisions of the Education and Provision of Meals Acts should be reconsidered. If relief, whether in the shape of food or clothing, is required for necessitous children, and cannot be forthcoming from voluntary sources, it should be provided by the public assistance committees.

THE AGED.

As regards indoor relief, the aged are to be separated from the able-bodied, housed on a separate site, and further subdivided into classes as far as possible with regard to their physical condition and their moral character. A system of small homes for the aged is advocated. As regards out-relief, the relief is to be adequate and the old people are to be periodically visited.

MEDICAL RELIEF OR ASSISTANCE.

The staff of Poor Law medical officers of the Local Government Board should be increased with a view to the periodic inspection by them of both indoor and outdoor medical relief arrangements in co-operation with Public Assistance Authorities. These authorities should in their administration of medical relief have the assistance of a special County Medical Assistance Committee, consisting of representatives of the health committee of the county or county borough council, of the British Medical Association, local hospitals, nursing associations, provident dispensaries and friendly societies. Medical treatment is to be more readily available (subject to recovery of the cost) to all who are in need of it, and the Public Assistance Authority are to review and, where necessary, supplement the medical and nursing needs of their area. They are to organise, with the co-operation of the British Medical Association, a system of provident dispensaries to which all local medical men may belong and which shall afford to its members not only the privilege of choosing their own doctor, but also that of obtaining institutional treatment either in Public Assistance or in voluntary hospitals. Domiciliary medical assistance, or, as it is now called, outdoor medical relief, is to be conditional upon the maintenance of a healthy domicile, and good habits. Finally, it is recommended

that no disfranchisement should be attached to any form of medical assistance.

ORDERS FOR DETENTION OR CONTINUOUS TREATMENT.

Certain classes of persons applying for, or receiving, public assistance should, subject to appeal, be liable to an order for continuous treatment after an application by the Public Assistance Authority to justices of the peace.

Persons to whom this provision will apply are those requiring continuous care and treatment on account of either extreme age or extreme youth, illness or disease of mind or body, or persistent indulgence in vice or pernicious habits—*e.g.*, helpless and friendless senile cases, the feeble-minded, venereal cases, &c.

Persons against whom an order for continuous treatment has been obtained would be under continuous control for the period named in the order; this control need not be exercised in an institution for the whole of such period, but, if necessary, the order would authorise the Public Assistance Authority to remove persons to and detain them in institutions.

SETTLEMENT AND REMOVAL.

The principal recommendations are that the methods of acquiring a settlement be reduced to four—viz., by birth, parentage, marriage, or residence. A settlement is to be acquired by one year's residence in a county or county borough, and the Local Government Board is to determine all cases of disputed settlement unless the Board considers that a particular case should be decided in a Court of law.

TEMPORARY COMMISSION.

Finally, a temporary Commission, working under the Local Government Board, is to be appointed with a view to securing the early and effective development of the new system of public assistance.

The report concludes with a tribute to the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. R. G. Duff, of the Local Government Board, who has "displayed great organising power, a clear judgment, and a complete grasp of the problems involved. His tact, energy, and enthusiasm have gone far to smooth the way and lighten the work of the Commission." The Commissioners also bear testimony to the valuable assistance lent by their assistant secretaries, Mr. Jeffrey, of the Scottish Local Government Board, and Mr. Craven, of the Statistical Department of the Customs.

THE MINORITY REPORT.

The minority report, which is signed by the Rev. Prebendary Russell Wakefield, Mr. F. Chandler, Mr. G. Lansbury, and Mrs. Sidney Webb, presents a scheme of reform which would break up the Poor Law, abolish boards of guardians, and transfer the duties now carried out by those bodies to existing committees of county and county borough councils. The statement of facts set forth by the Minority and the reasons they give for differing from their colleagues, together with their recommendations, occupy over 500 pages.

In the opinion of the Minority the whole realm of relief and assistance to the poor and to persons in distress has fallen into a state of anarchy and confusion as grave as that of 1834, "though in its own way." On the one hand there are the well-established destitution authorities, under

ineffective control, each pursuing its own policy in its own way ; sometimes rigidly restricting its relief to persons actually destitute, and giving it in the most deterrent and humiliating forms ; sometimes launching out into an indiscriminate and unconditional subsidising of mere poverty ; sometimes developing costly and palatial institutions for the treatment, either gratuitously or for partial payment, of practically any applicant of the wage-earning or of the lower middle-class. On the other hand, there are, equally ubiquitous with the destitution authorities, the newer specialised organs of local government—the local education, health, lunacy, unemployed, and pension authorities—all attempting to provide for the needs of the poor, according to the cause or character of their distress. Every Parliamentary Session adds to the powers of these specialised local authorities, and every Royal Commission or departmental committee recommends some fresh development of their activities, which are only half consciously sanctioned by public opinion, and only imperfectly authorised by statute.

Athwart the overlapping and rivalry of these local authorities, that may be all at work in a single district, there is the growing stream of private charity and voluntary agencies—almshouses and pensions for the aged ; hospitals and dispensaries ; convalescent homes and medical missions for the sick ; free dinners and free boots, country holidays and “ happy evenings ” for the children ; free shelters and soup kitchens, “ way tickets,” and charitable jobs for the able-bodied, together with uncounted indiscriminate doles of every description—without systematic organisation and without any co-ordination with the multifarious forms of public activity. In this condition of affairs the nation is confronted to-day, as it was in 1834, with an ever-growing expenditure from public and private funds, which results, on the one hand, in a *minimum* of prevention and cure, and on the other in far-reaching demoralisation of character and the continuance of no small amount of unrelieved destitution.

SCHEME OF REFORM.

In dealing with this situation the Minority say that the dominant exigencies which they have to take account of are :—

(1) The overlapping confusion and waste that result from the provision for each separate class being undertaken, in one and the same district, by two, three, and sometimes four separate local authorities, as well as by voluntary agencies.

(2) The demoralisation of character and the slackening of personal effort that result from the unnecessary spending of indiscriminate, unconditional, and gratuitous provision, through this unco-ordinated rivalry.

(3) The paramount importance of subordinating mere relief to the specialised treatment of each separate class with the object of preventing or curing its distress.

(4) The expediency of intimately associating this specialised treatment of each class with the standing machinery for enforcing, both before and after the period of distress, the fulfilment of personal and family obligations.

The Minority state that it is not practicable to oust the various specialised local authorities that have grown up since the Boards of Guardians were established, and in their view there remains only the alternative of completing the process of breaking up the Poor Law which has been going on for the last three decades. They therefore recommend a scheme of reform which involves—

(1) The final supersession of the Poor Law Authority by the newer specialised authorities already at work.

(2) The appropriate distribution of the remaining functions of the Poor Law among those existing authorities.

(3) The establishment of suitable machinery for registering and co-ordinating all the assistance afforded to any given person or family ; and

(4) The more systematic enforcement, by means of this co-ordinating machinery, of the obligation of able-bodied persons to support themselves and their families.

If, as it seems to the Minority, it has been imperative to put an end to the present wasteful and demoralising overlapping between local authorities, it is plain to them that it is the Destitution Authority—already denuded of several of its functions—that must give way to its younger rivals. Besides this paramount consideration, there are two incidental reasons which support the recommendation of the Minority for the abolition of Boards of Guardians in England, Wales, and Ireland, and, so far at any rate as their Poor Law work is concerned, of the Parish Councils in Scotland. These are (1) The grave economic and administrative inconveniences of the existing Poor Law areas ; and (2) the unnecessary multiplication of elected local authorities.

PROPOSED NEW AUTHORITY.

As to the question of a new area for administration and rating the Minority favour that of the County and County Borough, and in this they are in agreement with the majority of their colleagues. They go further, however, and say that in the event of this area being adopted, the local authority to be entrusted with the work cannot be other than the County Council and County Borough Council acting through its several Committees. The evidence of Mr. Walter Long, Lord Fitzmaurice, and others is quoted in support of this view. The setting up in London or in the County Boroughs of any separately elected body, for the same area, and levying rates on the same occupiers, appears to the Minority equally impracticable ; and they come inevitably to the proposals to transfer the duties of the Boards of Guardians to the Councils of the Counties and County Boroughs.

In the proposal to make these Counties financially responsible for all the duties at present performed by Boards of Guardians, the Minority are glad to find themselves in agreement with a majority of the Commissioners. They differ from them in the extent to which the Commissioners seek to withdraw the new services from the control of Councils themselves, and in the way in which they attempt to determine by what machinery of Committees and Sub-Committees the Councils shall carry out the work entrusted to them. The Minority think that these are matters which in practice the Councils will decide for themselves. They doubt whether any provision of Parliament will prevent a Town or County Council from exercising whatever measure of control it chooses over a service entrusted to one of its committees for which it has to find the money ; and they cannot help thinking that in adopting as their own the proposal that the unit of area should henceforth be the County and County Borough, and that the supreme authority should be the County Council and the County Borough Council, the majority of their colleagues have rendered inevitable the adoption of the principle of distributing the Poor Law Services among the Committees already concerned in those services. The Minority have satisfied themselves that in England and Wales at any rate, and they thought also in Scotland—Ireland presenting a somewhat different problem—there would be no serious difficulty in all the various functions of the

Poor Law being undertaken by those Committees. In the matter of the whole class of the able-bodied, whether vagrants, paupers, or the unemployed, for whom the Minority, later on, propose a national organisation, if it were decided to leave this class also to the local authorities there would be no difficulty in entrusting this branch of the work to its own appropriate Committee of the County or County Borough Council, in which the existing Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act would be merged.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Minority discuss all their proposals at great length and make the following recommendations :—

(1) That, except the 43 Elizabeth, c. 2, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 for England and Wales, and the various Acts for the relief of the poor and the corresponding legislation for Scotland and Ireland, so far as they relate exclusively to poor relief, and including the Law of Settlement, be repealed.

(2) That the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales, and Ireland, and (at any rate so far as Poor Law functions are concerned) the Parish Councils in Scotland, together with all combinations of these bodies, should be abolished.

(3) That the property and liabilities, powers, and duties of these Destitution Authorities should be transferred (subject to the necessary adjustments) to the County and County Borough Councils, strengthened in numbers as may be necessary for their enlarged duties ; with suitable modifications to provide for the special circumstances of Scotland and Ireland, and for the cases of the Metropolitan Boroughs, the non-County Boroughs over 10,000 in population, and the Urban Districts over 20,000 in population, on the plan they sketch out.

(4) That the provision of the various classes of the non-able-bodied should be wholly separated from that to be made for the able-bodied, whether these be unemployed workmen, vagrants, or able-bodied persons now in receipt of poor relief.

(5) That the services at present administered by the Destitution Authorities (other than those connected with vagrants or the able-bodied)—that is to say, the provisions for :—

- (a) Children of school age ;
- (b) The sick and the permanently incapacitated, the infants under school age, and the aged needing institutional care ;
- (c) The mentally defective of all grades and all ages ; and
- (d) The aged to whom pensions are awarded—should be assumed, under the direction of the County and County Borough Councils, by :—
 - (a) The Education Committee ;
 - (b) The Health Committee ;
 - (c) The Asylums Committee ; and
 - (d) The Pension Committee respectively.

(6) That the several Committees concerned should be authorised and required, under the directions of their councils, to provide, under suitable conditions and safeguards to be embodied in Statutes and regulative Orders, for the several classes of persons committed to their charge, whatever treatment they may deem most appropriate to their condition ; being either institutional treatment, in the various specialised schools, hospitals, asylums, &c., under their charge ; or, whenever judged preferable, domiciliary treatment, conjoined with the grant of Home Allowance where this is indispensably required.

(7) That the law with regard to liability to pay for relief or treatment received, or to contribute towards the maintenance of dependants and other relations, should be embodied in a definite and consistent code, on the basis, in those services, for which a charge should be made, of recovering the cost from all those who are really able to pay, and of exempting those who cannot properly do so.

(8) That there should be established in each County and County Borough one or more officers, to be designated Registrars of Public Assistance, to be appointed by the County and County Borough Council, and to be charged with the threefold duty of :—

- (i.) Keeping a Public Register of all cases in receipt of public assistance ;
- (ii.) Assessing and recovering, according to the law of the land and the evidence

as to sufficiency of ability to pay, whatever charges Parliament may decide to make for particular kinds of relief or treatment ; and

(iii.) Sanctioning the grants of Home Alimant proposed by the Committees concerned with the treatment of the case.

(9) That the Registrar of Public Assistance should have under his direction (and under the control of the General Purposes Committee of the County or County Borough Council) the necessary staff of Inquiry and Recovery Officers, and a local Receiving House for the strictly temporary accommodation of non-able-bodied persons found in need, and not as yet dealt with by the Committees concerned.

(10) That the present national subventions in aid of the Destitution Authorities should be replaced by Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure on the whole of the services to be administered by the Health Committees of the County and County Borough Councils, subject to the administration of these services up to, at any rate, a National Minimum of Efficiency ; the aggregate amount of such Grants-in-Aid for the United Kingdom and their allocation as between England (including Wales), Scotland, and Ireland being fixed, and subject to revision only every seven years ; but the distribution of this total among the several County and County Borough Councils being made, according to the plan we have specified, in proportion to their several gross expenditures on these services, and at the same time in such a proportion to the poverty of their districts as will enable the National Minimum of Efficiency to be everywhere attained without anywhere exceeding the standard average age.

(11) That the local authorities in England and Wales, in respect of the services administered by each Committee, be placed under the supervision of a single Department or Division of a Department of the National Government, which shall itself administer the Grants-in-Aid of its particular services, issue its own regulative Orders, and have its own technically qualified Inspectors ; the Education Committees in England and Wales being thus responsible for the efficiency of all their services to the Board of Education ; the Mentally Defectives (or Asylums) Committees to the proposed Board of Control, in succession to the Lunacy Commissioners ; the Pension Committees to whatever Department is deputed to take charge of the administration of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908 ; and the Health Committees, with regard to all their enlarged range of functions, to a separately organised and self-contained Public Health Department, whether this is organised as a separate Division of the Local Government Board or made a distinct Department. The determination of appeals from the decision of the Registrar of Public Assistance, and whatever national supervision may be exercised over the grant of Home Alimant to the Non-Able-Bodied, should, we suggest, be entrusted to another separately organised and self-contained Department or Division of a Department which, if it can be dissociated from the Local Government Board, might, with advantage, be placed, along with the Department, or Division dealing with Audit, Loans, and Local Finance generally, in close connection with the Treasury.

(12) That a temporary Executive Commission be appointed to adjust areas, boundaries, assets, and liabilities ; and to allocate buildings and officers among the future Local Authorities.

QUESTION OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

The Minority devote Part II. of their report, extending over more than 200 pages, to the consideration of the problem presented by distress from unemployment and the destitution of the able-bodied, and they point out that the proposals which they make upon the subject are in no way dependent upon those already dealt with.

It is proposed by the Minority that the duty of so organising the National Labour Market as to prevent or to minimise unemployment should be placed upon a Minister responsible to Parliament, who might be designated the Minister of Labour ; that the Ministry of Labour should include six distinct and separately organised divisions, each with its own assistant secretary—namely, the National Labour Exchange, the Trade Insurance Division, the Maintenance and Training Division, the Industrial Regulation Division, the Emigration and Immigration Division, and the Statistical Division.

The necessity of establishing these sections are fully discussed ; and it is proposed, among other things :—

That in order to meet the periodically recurrent general depressions of trade the Government should take advantage of there being at these periods as much unemployment of capital as there is unemployment of labour ; that it should definitely undertake, as far as practicable, the regularisation of the national demand for labour ; and that it should, for this purpose, and to the extent of at least £4,000,000 a year, arrange a portion of the ordinary work required by each Department on a ten years' programme : £40,000,000 worth of work for the decade being then put in hand, not by equal annual instalments, but exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle ; being paid for out of loans for short terms raised as they are required, and being executed with the best available labour, at standard rates, engaged in the ordinary way.

That in this ten years' programme there should be included works of afforestation, coast protection and land reclamation ; to be carried out by the Board of Agriculture exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle ; by the most suitable labour obtainable, taken on in the ordinary way, at the rates locally current for the work, and paid for out of loans raised as required.

It should be added that of the original Commissioners The O'Connor Don has died, and Mr. Charles Booth retired, owing to ill-health, last February.



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